

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

The Feminisation of Vulnerability to Poverty in Rural Communities:

An Examination of Koraro Village Ethiopia

Michelle de Jongh

Doctor of Philosophy

January 2019

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a postgraduate research degree of the University of Winchester

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my great appreciation to my supervisory team, especially to Dr Martina Hutton and Dr Lez Rayman-Bacchus for their guidance, feedback, time and contributions to this thesis. Further, to Dr Lez Rayman-Bacchus for always challenging my ideas and encouraging me to critically address my arguments from different perspectives, and for his support and friendship over these years.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the University of Addis Ababa for assisting me while I was in Ethiopia. Further, to my research assistants Adunga Lema, Henok Mengistu and Bahran Gebru who contributed towards this study. To their families who were very kind and welcomed me into their homes. I would like to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude to all of the women and men who participated in this study.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Sylvia Chant for her comments on some of my work and on our discussion on the feminisation of poverty, and to Professor Sara Cantillon for her feedback on several chapters of this thesis. Further, I would like to thank the external examiners for their contributions and to the viva chair for his time.

I would like to thank my wonderful partner, my family and friends for their unconditional support and encouragement over these years.

Finally, I would like to thank the post graduate office for their assistance over the last four years, and to Professor Pru Marriot. To John and Elizabeth Bouldin for their financial contributions which helped me during the last six months of my PhD.

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ABSTRACT

The Feminisation of Vulnerability to Poverty in Rural Communities:

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This research examines how gendered entitlements and obligations in the household, alongside socio-cultural practices, contribute to the vulnerability of women to poverty. In particular, this research focuses on the experiences of female-headed households in the context of an ecologically fragile rural community. Located at the intersection of feminist and poverty and development theory, this inter-disciplinary study offers new insight into the feminisation of poverty thesis; a topic that remains underexplored in the context of rural communities. The vulnerability of women to poverty is interrogated through a multi-dimensional asset accumulation framework, comprising an amalgam of gender, assets, vulnerability and empowerment. This framework facilitates the examination of both the structural and socio-cultural realities of the livelihood strategies of female-headed households, in ecologically fragile communities. Koraro village, Ethiopia was chosen for this study as it represents a small village routinely exposed to adverse environmental conditions, set in a wider context of a struggling sub-Saharan economy. The methodological approach is qualitative, involving an ethnographic study of women's life in Koraro village including, in-depth contextual interviews, observations, and photographs of daily household activities. Consistent with a qualitative approach the data was grouped and analysed thematically.

Findings show that the livelihood strategies of female-headed households are shaped by their capabilities to accumulate and mobilise sufficient appropriate assets. Evidence suggests that female-headed households are continuously renegotiating with institutionalised male authority for access to essential assets as well as their social participation within the wider community. In these socio-cultural relationships, the entitlements of women are subordinated to the socio-cultural entitlements of men. Further, the gender division of trade place women in transient market spaces, forcing the engagement of women in the informal economy. The analysis reveals women using dynamic livelihood strategies, especially interdependent relationships between female-headed households in order to garner assets and social status. Still, female-headed households seem to be more vulnerable to nutrition and health deprivation and poor social well-being. The research contributes to the gender and development discourse, offering a new and hitherto unexamined perspective to the feminisation poverty thesis, focussing on the social processes that engender vulnerability of women in ecologically fragile rural communities.

Keywords: poverty, gender, female-headed households, livelihood strategies, Ethiopia, rural communities

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Chapter One: Introduction

1 Introduction

Gender inequality is a global problem. Women and girls experience gender inequality differently in different countries and at different extremes. Broadly speaking discriminatory social norms and/or laws place women in a subordinate social position to men in society. The extent to which gender inequality impacts the capabilities of women to make choices and sustain their livelihoods is shaped by political, environmental and social factors. The international community recognises that gender inequality is a fundamental development issue, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs): gender inequality (SDG 5); and implicated in several other Goals including reducing inequalities (SDG 10), more decent work (SDG 8), quality education for both girls and boys (SDG 4), poverty (SDG 1), and the enablement of justice through strong institutions (SDG 10).

UN women website (2019) highlight the social, political and economic plight of women in the world. Accordingly, 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same work choices as men. Almost one third of women's employment globally is in agricultural production while women only account for 12.8 percent of agricultural land holders. Women disproportionately bare the burdens of unpaid domestic work, women and girls are responsible for collecting 80 percent of household water and are more at risk to indoor air pollution related deaths. They are more vulnerable to climate-change related shocks and are fourteen times more likely than men to die during a disaster. It is estimated that if women's unpaid work were assigned a monetary value it would constitute between 10 and 39 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Women between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four are more likely than men to experience acute income privation due to their unequal access to economic resources and their double burdens of domestic and paid work. Globally women are more likely than men to report that they are food insecure and they are more at risk to nutrition deprivation (UN Women, 2019a). Further, at least 35 percent of women around the world have experienced physical and sexual violence in their lives, and in 2017 50 thousand women were killed by intimate partners or family members. Women and girls account for 71 percent of all human trafficking victims. It is estimated that around 650 million girls under the age of eighteen are married, and at least 200 thousand girls have undergone female genital mutilation (UN Women, 2019b).

These global policy ambitions and evidences reflect widespread and established debates about institutional and cultural challenges to recognising the (intrinsic) human rights of women and girls such as (OHCHR; *Girls not Brides*), to the (instrumental) arguments about the contribution of women to sustainable growth and poverty reduction by 2030 (World Bank, 2015c). Aid directed to addressing gender inequality has increased in recent years contributing to improved health and education for girls and women. However, the persistence of workplace discrimination in what the OECD calls the *economic and productive* sectors place women in lower-paying and less secure jobs than men. Women are paid less, own fewer assets, run smaller businesses and are more vulnerable to poverty (ibid).

The following section of this chapter will address the personal motivation statement for carrying-out this research followed by; the research aim and objectives, the methods used in this research, the overall contribution of this study, and the thesis structure.

1.1 Personal motivation for conducting this study

The personal motivation to pursue this research was influenced by several aspects from my professional career and previous academic studies. Prior to starting my PhD, I was working in post-conflict Liberia (West Africa) for two different companies. The companies wanted to mainstream responsible social and environmental operating practices to comply with the International Financial Corporation's (IFC) Sustainable Development Guidelines. I travelled to and from Liberia for three years and my role gave me access to several isolated ecologically fragile rural communities where the companies were operating. I spent several months researching the needs of the communities which included using participatory assessment tools. The grievances of men and women were different as their experience of poverty were different. The men were more concerned with employment and money, and the women were more concerned with food insecurity, childcare and their reproductive burdens. The communities suffered from a lack of safe drinking water; food insecurity; poor health care and high infection rates of communicable diseases i.e. malaria, typhoid and yellow fever; poor housing and overcrowding averaging ten people per rudimentary structure; limited infrastructure with no passable roads; and, high illiteracy rates and gender-based violence. Another aspect of my job was to align the research findings with Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). However, the practical application of the policy guidelines that underpin the PRSP and the best practice procedures revealed the gap

between what was being experienced in the community and the wider development policies. Gender issues were marginalised in the PRSP framework, which made it difficult for me to secure corporate funds for women only focused projects. I spent much time with the women in the communities and this motivated me to undertake a PhD that focusses on gender inequality and poverty. The life stories of the women in Liberia significantly influenced the literature I explored, which shaped this thesis. There were several key themes: the overrepresentation of women in petty-trading markets; food stock management; reproductive work burdens; their interdependent relationships to sustain their livelihoods; and, their willingness more than the men to contribute to the development of the community. Further, my Liberian experience guided me and helped me to reflect on the gender and development literature, the overall design of the study, and the fieldwork strategy. Importantly, the experiences that inspired me to carry out this research has kept my thinking tethered to the realities of the lives of women in struggling economies.

1.2 Research aim and objectives

Broadly taking a livelihoods perspective to poverty, this research examines how gendered *entitlements and obligations* (within the household), and *socio-cultural practices*, contribute to the vulnerability of women to poverty in general, and to the vulnerability of female headed households in particular, all set in the context of an ecologically fragile rural community. Here, female-headed households are seen as active economic agents, employing a variety of survival strategies (livelihood strategies), while facing numerous socio-cultural and environmental challenges.

Entitlements refer to the claim and control over resources and obligations refer to socially determined responsibilities. In this research socio-cultural practices refer to social customs, beliefs, values and language that shape a person's identity and reality. This includes social engagement in a variety of roles with others in a domestic setting, including interpersonal roles with family members and kinship, and community roles, such as participation in organisations and religious events.

This aim is explored through close examination of its constituent elements, presented as three inter-related research objectives around the role of (in order): the ecological environment; the role of gendered entitlements and obligations on women's livelihood

strategies; and the influence of socio-cultural practices on women's economic participation. The objectives are in turn broken down into two overlapping questions: a) all women, and b) female headed households. The primary focus is on the latter but recognises that the issues raised apply to all women in general.

Objective 1: To examine the relationship between the ecological landscape and female headed households' vulnerability to poverty. Here the ecological landscape refers to the characteristics of a particular geographic locale, external shocks (environmental, economic, social and political), and macrosocial institutional arrangements. The objective therefore introduces two inter-related questions:

- a) how does the ecological landscape shape the vulnerability of all women to poverty? and,
- b) what are the coping strategies of female headed households to sustain external shocks?

Objective 2: To examine the socio-cultural practices that shape the allocation of entitlements and obligations within the household and community, and in particular how these promote the vulnerability to poverty of female headed households. This objective is addressed by close examination of the ascribed entitlements and obligations of women with respect to the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community entitlements. From this two questions emerge:

- a. how do ascribed entitlements and obligations shape all women's sense of agency and well-being? additionally,
- b. how do ascribed entitlements and obligations inform the livelihood strategies of female headed households?

Objective 3: To examine how the socio-cultural practices shape the economic participation (i.e. work) of women in the wider community. This objective introduces two questions:

- a. what work all women are entitled to do? additionally,
- b. how does this shape the livelihood strategies of female headed households?

1.3 The methods

To address the aim and objectives, Ethiopia was selected as the country of study, focusing on Koraro, a small rural village, located in the northern province of Tigray. I believe this is the first feminist study carried out in Koraro village, which examines the feminisation of poverty from a rural context. Koraro is an ecologically fragile village because it is at risk to environmental hazards (droughts, flooding and famine). The methodological approach used in this research is ethnographic, involving multiple methods of gathering data (interviews, observation, photography). The choice of location for this research, its planning, and subsequent execution, took several months, as it involved securing Ethiopian government permission, support from the University of Addis Ababa, and the preparation of local logistical arrangements. The in-country data was gathered over two field-trips, separated by several months. This separation of field work allowed for a period of critical reflection on both the theoretical framework and the collected data. During the time of reflection some conceptual weaknesses were identified and addressed. During both expeditions, in-depth semi-structured and unstructured interviews were carried out, observational data was collected, and photographs taken (with permission) of daily household activities. The data collected focused on agricultural and non-agricultural work; rural and urban market trading; community ceremonies and celebrations; and religious rituals and festivals. This observational data was collected inside and outside of Koraro spanning four adjacent regions; Tigray, Afar, Amhara and Oromia. Lastly, in order to gain a measure of the validity and reliability of findings, this researcher triangulated the in-country findings with an in-depth documentary analysis of: academic studies, regional and local government reports, and research reports from various international developmental agencies.

1.4 Contribution

This research enriches our understanding of the challenges (institutional and cultural) to reducing inequality, but also highlights how, despite these hurdles, women are able to create space for themselves and their households, developing economic independence along the way. This thesis offers fresh ways of considering the challenges and prospects of women, especially female-headed households in fragile ecological environments. The study offers new insight into the vulnerability of women to poverty in these environments and highlights the coping strategies of female-headed households. It proposes that the nature of

women's entitlements and obligations are *transient*. Transience is a state of impermanence, and this study suggests that women living in challenging rural environments (environmentally, economically, and socially) experience daily life as mix of ephemeral entitlements and increasing obligations. Further, the nature of this transient phenomenon has both spatial and temporal dimensions. Temporally, transient entitlements and obligations seem to evolve over the life time of women, as they transform from girls, from single to married, from married to divorced, from so-called dependent wife to independent agent, finally to respected grandmother. Spatially, women experience this transience in different ways as they move through the various stages of their lives, from unmarried girl to female-headed household. This research offers evidence of how women engage with this transient life, through their survival and livelihood strategies. Transient entitlement and obligations of women must be understood in relation to the entitlements and obligations of men of the community.

1.5 Thesis structure and content

Chapter two, *Vulnerability, Poverty and Livelihoods*, presents the overarching theoretical framework used in this research. The chapter draws on the feminisation of poverty thesis and the multi-dimensional poverty literature. It investigates the conceptual ambiguities of the feminisation of poverty thesis by addressing the theoretical approach of the poverty line that impinges the dominant view of the concept. The chapter builds on the arguments put forward by Chant, furthering the thesis by adopting a livelihoods perspective. The literature provides the space to examine relationship between the ecological landscape and the vulnerability of women to poverty by focussing on the resources of the poor and their ability to withstand sustained external shocks. The chapter interrogates the resilience of the poor through Moser's multi-dimensional asset accumulation framework. Further, the dynamism of Moser's framework is employed, which provides the foundation for examining both the structural and socio-cultural reality of the survival and livelihood strategies of women in ecologically fragile environments.

Chapter three, *Gender, Household and Community*, deepens the investigation by delving into gendered entitlements and obligations with respect to the particular microsocial institutional arrangements. The chapter explores the literature that examines the socio-cultural practices which shapes the allocation of rights and responsibilities within the household and

community. This draws on the work Kabeer and Moore to address how the allocation of rights and responsibilities *influences* women's human and social capital development over time. The chapter discusses the socio-cultural dimensions of gender and household headship, gender and the marriage contract, and the community. The chapter further explores the socio-cultural dimensions by focussing on how the socio-cultural dimensions of gender shapes the basic needs of the individual, in terms of human survival and gender. It draws on the literature that deconstructs human capital endowments from a gender perspective, in particular nutrition, health, and labour entitlements. The chapter argues that the parameters of human capital endowments need to be expanded to include agency, and the health endowment needs to include psychological and social well-being, in order to further develop the feminisation of poverty discourse.

Chapter four, *Methodology*, presents the methodological approach used in this study to address the research aim and objectives. Ethiopia was selected as the country of study, with particular focus on a small rural village Koraro located in the northern province of Tigray. The chapter presents the feminist epistemological position of this research and details the methodological approach and design; a case study using ethnographic techniques involving qualitative multi-methods of data collection. Consistent with the qualitative approach, this chapter presents the data collection methods used over a period of several months, detailing how the field work was carried out in-country. Further, the chapter addresses the research quality, rigor and ethics of the study.

Chapter five, *Ecology of Koraro*, examines the relationship between the ecological landscape and the vulnerability to poverty of female headed households. The chapter explores how Koraro's ecological landscape shapes the vulnerability of women to poverty, and their coping strategies to withstand sustained external shocks. The chapter explores Koraro's ecological landscape and capital asset portfolio and examines how Koraro's fragile natural environment and poorly developed infrastructure shapes the capabilities of women to meet the basic needs and social well-being of their households. The chapter examines the impacts of the environmental shocks on local agricultural production, market conditions, food insecurity alongside household coping strategies and the intra-household dynamics of female-headed households during the annual *hungry season*. Household interdependency is a common survival and livelihood theme explored throughout the findings and analysis chapters. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the macrosocial institutional arrangements that address Koraro's food insecurity and household assistance.

Chapter six, *Koraro Household and Community Entitlements*, examines why women are more vulnerable to Koraro's fragile ecology by exploring the socio-cultural practices that shape the allocation of entitlements and obligations within the household and community. The chapter addresses this through close examination of the ascribed rights and responsibilities of Ethiopian women with respect to the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community entitlements. Further, it examines how the ascription of rights and obligations shape Ethiopian women's sense of agency and well-being, and additionally how these inform the livelihood strategies of women who head their own households. This chapter is arranged into two parts. The first part examines how the institution of marriage shapes the life-cycle of rural Ethiopians, highlighting the transient nature of rights and responsibilities of women with respect to family and kinship. This part also explores how the gender division of labour reproduces gender roles and relations in the household, thereby informing female social identity and the marriageability of girls. It examines the socio-cultural practices that shape the transition of girls from single to married, from married to divorced, from so-called dependent wife to independent agent, finally to respected grandmother. The second part of this chapter focuses on female-headed households and community entitlements. It examines how women navigate traditions and values to secure and maintain access to community entitlements. Female-headed households exist within a patriarchal community and their livelihoods are shaped by their social relations with other community members and authority. This part explores the strategies of women for accumulating essential assets in order to meet their basic needs. It highlights the legal and traditional arrangements they draw on in order to secure access to shelter and food and through subsistence agricultural production.

Whereas the previous two chapters explore how and why women are more vulnerable to Koraro's fragile ecological landscape, this chapter (Chapter seven), *Koraro Economic Entitlements*, investigates the gender division of labour with respect to the economic participation of women in the rural economy. It examines what type of work women are entitled to do and how this shapes the survival and livelihood strategies of female-headed households. The chapter examines the complexities of market participation by dividing economic engagement into three interconnected market spaces: macro-markets, meso-markets and micro-markets. It explores how the gender division of trade shapes the unequal participation of women in each market space and how this contributes to the economic livelihoods of female headed households. The chapter highlights that these economic rights of women are transient, marginalising their participation in trading markets.

Further, it explores women's strategy of drawing on their social networks through trade in different market spaces. The chapter addresses the economic strategies of female-headed households who adapt their homes into an essential productive asset and examine the strategies of women who sell traditional alcohol from their homes.

Chapter 8, *Conclusions, The Feminisation of Vulnerability to Poverty*, pulls together the thesis and comprises a number of elements: restatement of the *aims and objectives*, including reflection on how well the aim and objectives have been met. The chapter summarises the *theoretical approach* adopted in the study; the overall *research design* employed including an acknowledgement of weaknesses. The chapter provides a summary of findings, this study's contribution to knowledge, and suggests directions for further research.

The *epilogue*: this is a short reflective piece written with the intension of guiding future researchers who wish to carry out a similar piece of research. It should be read in conjunction with chapter four (*Methodology*).

Chapter Two: Vulnerability, Poverty and Livelihoods

2 Introduction

This chapter sets out the overarching theoretical framework that will be used to examine the research aim and objectives. Located at the intersection of feminist, poverty and development theory, this research draws on the feminisation of poverty thesis, and the multi-dimensional poverty literature. The chapter begins with a critical examination of the feminisation of poverty thesis within the gender and development discourse (Jackson, 1996;1998; Moghadam, 1997;1998;2005; Brydon, 2010; Chant, 2007;2008;2010;2016; David and van Driel, 2010; Mederios and Costa, 2006;2008;2010; Chant and McLlwaine, 2016). Firstly, this section introduces the theoretical background of the feminisation of poverty and its emergence into the development lexicon which has produced conflicting arguments, thus making the concept ambiguous and arduous to define. The section sets out to examine these conceptual ambiguities by addressing the theoretical approach of the poverty line that impinges the dominant view of the concept, referred to in this research as the classic approach to the feminisation of poverty. Following that, the section moves to the arguments to further the thesis through the adoption of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty.

The following section of this chapter, livelihoods from a gender perspective, draws on the multi-dimensional poverty literature, examining the expansion of Sen's (1981;1987;1999) entitlements and capabilities approach. This section explores the social complexities of gendered entitlements and how these conceptual views have informed livelihood frameworks and capital asset studies focusing on what the poor have and how they manage their resources. The capital asset literature provides the space to examine the relationship between the ecological landscape and vulnerability to poverty. The section moves on to discuss gender and vulnerability; vulnerability within the multi-dimensional poverty literature refers to the ability of the poor to react to risks, negative social and political changes, and external shocks. Vulnerability, capital assets and livelihood strategies are interdependent of each other. Following this, the section will interrogate the livelihoods approach through Moser's (1998;2007;2008;2009;2016) multi-dimensional asset accumulation framework, comprising an amalgam of gender, assets, vulnerability and empowerment. This section explores the dynamism of Moser's framework to provide a foundation to examine both the structural and socio-cultural reality of the livelihood strategies of women in ecologically fragile environments.

The concluding section of this chapter will reflect on the above literature and provide a summary of the subsequent questions that have arisen out of the analysis and inform the proceeding chapter gender, household and community.

2.1 A critical examination of the feminisation of poverty

The feminisation of poverty was first introduced by sociologist Diana Pearce (1983) in the United States. Pearce acknowledged that there was a relationship between the increase in women and children's poverty with the rising number of female-headed households, particularly those of Afro-Caribbean descent (Moghadam, 2005). The poverty rate for female-headed households was three times higher than for male-headed households (Peterson, 1987). Pearce (1983) argued that the long-term structural changes of the labour market, marriage and child rearing responsibilities was the direct cause of the feminisation of poverty. Furthermore, she intersected these structural changes with ethnicity, arguing that the burdens of poverty in Afro-Caribbean male-headed households radically shifted to female-headed households in the 1970s. She contended that although poor people share commonalities such as; low education and (relevant) skills, and poor access to job markets, the incidence of poverty for women was higher than men because of two particular social female phenomena. Firstly, women who head their families bear the majority if not all the household's economic and child rearing responsibilities. Secondly, sex discrimination and occupation segregation in the labour market thwarted any improvement to women's income relative to men. Furthermore, this was compounded by the sexual harassment women face in the workplace (Pearce, 1983). Pearce emphasised there was a growing expectation of women to work outside the household at some point in their lives. However, sex role socialisation did not prepare women to be the primary economic providers;

‘...the traditional emphasis has been on jobs, rather than careers, and on making job choices that emphasize flexibility and adaptability, rather than income potential. Thus, women faced with the necessity of being the sole source of support for themselves and their children are handicapped’ (Pearce, 1983:70-71).

Pearce drew on the concepts of dual-economy theory which divides jobs and industries into primary and secondary sectors. Primary sector jobs are well paid, unionised occupations that protect workers' rights, secondary sector jobs are low paid, seasonal non-unionised occupations where workers' rights are marginalised – women and minorities are located

predominately within the latter sector (ibid). She argued that those located in the secondary sector were further disadvantaged through what she referred to as the duality of the welfare system which mirrored the duality of the economy. Similar to the characteristics of primary sector jobs, the primary welfare sector privileged those in it through unemployment benefits and social security, whereby primary welfare was identified as an 'earned' right (Pearce, 1983:71). Access to the primary welfare sector was dependent on the benefits of employment in the primary sector. Whereas, the secondary welfare sector was characterised by impoverished welfare sector training programmes and lower benefits as it mirrored the marginalised rights of the secondary employment sector. Women and minorities were overrepresented in the secondary welfare sector. Studies on the feminisation of poverty in the United States focussed on changes in the household, the labour market, and the welfare sector (Peterson, 1987). Over the years this produced varying literature on the feminisation of poverty which found its way into the development discourse:

'[w]omen tend to be disproportionately represented among the poor... the poorer the family the more likely it is to be headed by women as stated by the World Bank' (1989: iv, cited in Jackson, 1998: 43).

The concept gained international momentum at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women 1995 (Beijing Platform for Action) asserting that seventy percent (70%) of the world's poorest were women (UN Women, 1995). However, since then the feminisation of poverty has become 'common currency in the development lexicon' shaping macro-level poverty reduction initiatives (Chant, 2007:1). The Beijing Platform for Action represented the most comprehensive 'political agreement ever reached in defining female poverty' (ibid). Consequently, the concept created gendered sound-bites or slogans such as; women are the poorest of the poor, simplifying the complexities of gender inequalities and poverty (ibid). The feminisation of poverty is a combination of two critical subjects; 'gender inequality and poverty' (Medeiros and Costa, 2010:95). However, gender inequality is not only experienced by the poor, and poverty is not only experienced by women (ibid). To critically analyse the feminisation of poverty, depends on how both terms feminisation and poverty are defined. Feminisation is a term used to examine both the 'static phenomenon' and the 'dynamic process' of gender and poverty, by comparing privation between 'gender groups' and household headship' (ibid). This research adopts Medeiros and Costa's (2006) definition of feminisation, feminisation is a social process whereby a condition such as poverty or labour becomes feminised. Poverty is a complex notion embodying multiple

meanings (Medeiros and Costa, 2006;2007). The consensus of what poverty is and how it should be measured is divided. There are three main approaches to poverty within the development discourse. The poverty line approach¹ separates the poor from the non-poor in relation to an economic threshold. The capabilities approach (multi-dimensional or livelihoods approach) examines the broader 'social means (endowments and entitlements) including ends to poverty (functioning achievements)', capabilities provides the space for gender and 'blurs the distinction between ends and means' in the poverty debate (Kabeer, 2003:79). The third approach, the participatory poverty assessment analyses the 'impacts and outcomes of poverty in more context-specific ways' (ibid). This approach is used by various international development agencies particularly the UN and World Bank. Therefore, two complex terms feminisation and poverty, are applied in various ways, thus producing multiple meanings of the construct.

2.1.1 The classic approach to the feminisation of poverty

The ambiguities of the feminisation of poverty have produced multiple meanings associated with three main statements which this research refers to as the common approach or construct to the feminisation of poverty:

'Women are the majority of the world's poor; the incidence of poverty among women is growing relative to men over time; and, that women's rising share of poverty is linked with feminisation of household headship' (Chant, 2007:1).

The assertions underpinning the common construct are grounded in the poverty line approach suggesting that poverty is a fixed economic state rather than an evolving social condition over time. Poverty is dependent on numerous variables which are relative to various regions, not only economic factors. Chant (2010) argues that the common approach infers a static notion of poverty, and 'therefore anomalous within a construct whose very nomenclature implies dynamism' (112). However, these statements are vernacular within development institutions whereby the construct (in present day) has become synonymous with gender and development. Davids and van Driel (2010) claim that this static notion of

¹ In 1985, the poverty line was known as the dollar-a-day threshold, and in 2005, it was revised to US\$1.25 USD a day as of October 2015 the revised poverty line is US\$1.90 per day (World Bank, 2015b).

gender and poverty embodied in the classic feminisation of poverty has conflated gender to mean female, thereby removing the power dynamics embedded in gender relations. In the gender and development literature gender is defined as a socially constructed phenomenon that 'shapes the [social identity] and [roles] of women and men, and their relationship between them' (Chant and McLlwaine, 2009:205). Whereas, sex refers to the biological and physical characteristics between men and women. Furthermore, gender roles are shaped by:

'...particular socio-economic, political and cultural context, and are affected by other factors, including age, race, class and ethnicity. Gender roles are learned and vary widely within and between culture ... [and] can change. Gender roles help to determine women's access to rights, resources and opportunities', as stated by Pietial (2007, cited in Chant & McLlwaine, 2009: 205).

The construction of gender varies across cultures embodying culture specific notions of masculinity and femininity intersecting 'class, race, ethnicity, religion and age'. However, gender roles are not fixed and change over space and time as a result of external factors. An analysis of gender roles and relations must be interpreted within specific social contexts recognising 'historical and political' aspects of different places and societies (Momsen, 2004:2-3). The concept of gender embodies social ideals of femininity and masculinity that are acquired over time, and gender relations are socially constructed exchanges between men and women (Momsen, 2010). Day (2001) argues that femininity is produced through the 'negotiation with, and polarisation of, masculine gender identities' (109-110). Moore (1994) argues that gender identity is simultaneously constructed and experienced through a relationship between 'structure and praxis', and 'between the individual and the social' (49). Moore is highlighting the complexities embedded in gender identity, emphasising that it is a social concept that is created both subjectively (through the lived experience) and objectively (through societal norms). Fukuda-Parr (1999) found in her research in rural West African communities that the feminisation of poverty was associated with social identity, women were identified by the community as 'poor' because of their lower social status, agency and autonomy (101). Fukuda-Parr's study highlights the power dynamics embedded in gender roles within a particular social context, whereby poverty is categorised in relation to social status rather than income. Gender roles are produced and reproduced through social customs, beliefs, values and language located in space and time. Van Blerk (2011) argues that space is not only 'physical space' it also embodies 'social space' constructed through 'social relations and the interactions of social groups' shaping 'social identities' as a product of a particular space (220). Van Blerk is arguing that space, social identities and

relations are interrelated concepts constructed through various social processes. Shilling (1991) argues that space itself is 'implicated in the production of individual identities and social inequalities'. It is, a 'resource which simultaneously structures and is structured by individuals in the course of their day-to-day lives, it is central to the production and reproduction of social relationships' (23). This is further examined in the following chapter, gender, household and community with respect to the microsocial institutional arrangements of the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community entitlements.

Jackson (1996;1998), Razavi (1997), Chant (2007;2008;2010), Mederios and Costa (2006;2008;2010) all argue that the classic construction of the feminisation of poverty falls into a number of traps that reject the concept. Firstly, it is primarily associated with income privation therefore, it needs to be supported by available individual income and consumption data disaggregated by sex. Income privation or the poverty line² encompasses an 'economic gradient', which represents the typical nutritional requirements that are similar between developed and developing countries (Ravallion *et al.*, 2008:2). The line also represents the ability to purchase basic non-food stuffs to meet an individual's basic survival needs (*ibid*). However, many developing countries, like Ethiopia, measure income privation through consumption and expenditure data, rather than, income and consumption data. This is because income data is not a reliable measure in developing countries. Furthermore, the poverty line focuses on the household as the unit of analysis, opposed to focussing on the individual. The unit of analysis makes it difficult to compare privation between the sexes.

Defining the household as a universal concept is difficult. The idealised notion of the household as a nuclear family stems from Eurocentric stereotypes (Chant and McLlwaïne, 2009). Households vary culturally, in size and structure, thus making them extremely complex. From an anthropological perspective, the household refers to 'the basic unit of society involved in production, reproduction, consumption and socialisation' whose utility varies between cultures and time (Moore, 1988:54). However, the majority of households are constructed through 'kinship or marriage', although, this does not imply that the

² The poverty line is calculated using the World Bank's purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rate method. The PPP methodology converts local currency into US dollars rather than utilising exchange rates, thereby setting an international poverty line (World Bank, 2015b).

household is akin to the family³ (Moore, 1988; Kabeer, 2003; Chant and McLlwaine, 2009). The poverty line is inherently gender bias, assuming that intra-household income distribution is equal and that women have control over their individual incomes (Bessell, 2010). Thus, making intra-household poverty invisible, some members in an economically well-off household may live in poverty while others do not. This is applicable to both male and female-headed households. Further-to-that, the poverty line completely disregards societies that place 'profound social value on individual's/household's communal, kinship obligations that may limit their autonomy over their income' (59).

Data collection in developing countries on household income is 'difficult and prone to error', and in (2005) when global income poverty figures were more robust, it was difficult to accurately locate gender within the data in the 'absence of a globally comprehensive database on women's income privation relative to men's' (Chant, 2007:4). The poverty figures presented by the World Bank in the 1990s were not adequate by their own admission:

'The original data set on national poverty lines covered only 22 developing countries, all for the 1980s and mainly drawn from academic studies. This sample had particularly weak coverage of Africa and the lines were sometimes only for rural areas and some excluded non-food needs' (Ravallion, 2010:1).

Bessell (2010), Kabeer (1994;2003;2011), Chant (2007;2008;2010) argue that the poverty line does not capture the burdens that women carry in supporting the household through their unpaid reproductive work. Reproductive work is observed as the sexual division of labour within the household and is undervalued by the poverty line. Women are responsible for the maintenance of the household such as; food preparation, child rearing, cleaning, subsistence farming, and among others . Women's unpaid reproductive work 'ensures the production and productivity of the labour power that keeps the entire economy working' (Kabeer, 2003:29). The reproductive labour of women is closely tied to family and kinship entitlements and obligations, the household is a space whereby socio-cultural practices are reproduced, this is examined in more detail in the following chapter.

Another failing of the classic feminisation of poverty is its relation to household headship. This has become problematic because the measure of female-headed households' income

³ 'There are many instances, for example, in which people do not live with kin, but reside alone, or with friends and workmates' (Chant and McLlwaine, 2009:238).

privation (who fall below the poverty line) has been 'broadly adopted as a measure of women's poverty' (Fukuda-Parr, 1999:99). However, this is not to argue that, female-headed households are not more vulnerable to poverty than male-headed household. The ideal pertaining to household headship is entrenched in 'Judaean-Christian' identities, whereby 'power is devolved to men at household level' (Chant & McLlwaine, 2009: 239). This ideology of headship assumes that one household member (man) holds the position of authority and is responsible for all the other household members, therefore 'undervaluing' women's household contributions. However, female-headed households are classified within the data as a household with an absent male partner. Further-to-that, the data collected is entrenched in comparing income privation between household heads, because female-headship is a visible identifiable social group that can be quantified (Chant, 2007). Data collected at household level comparing income aggregates, disregards household size, intra-household resources allocation and the intangible aspects of poverty (ibid). There is an assumption that men 'undertake unpaid reproductive work' in male-headed households when compared to female-headed households (Davids and van Driel, 2010:105). Further-to-that, the data does not consider how female-headed households are formed, thereby grouping female-headship into one homogenous category. If there was a comparison between male only male-headed households with female only female-headed households, it may provide for better insight. Mederios and Costa (2010) argue that 'measures of poverty among female-headed households and among women are not one and the same' (98). Although poverty in female-headed households is attributed to gender dynamics, it is not a 'proxy for poverty among women' (ibid). However, the popularised notion of female-headship and poverty has served as a 'justification for gender and development lobbyists' for policy intervention and resource allocation (Chant, 2007:103). Although, studies conducted by the World Bank and other organisations have found that 'female household headship does not predict an above-average probability of income poverty in any consistent manner' (04). Chant (1997;2007) found that many women choose to head their households, rather than to be financially dependent on partners or ex-spouses – as a form of empowerment. Therefore, the static notion of the feminisation of poverty does not hold true in the absence of reliable data, thus making the UN's claim that seventy-percent of the world's poorest are women to be unsupported.

Jackson (1996;1998) argues that the feminisation of poverty pays marginal attention to the heterogeneity of women as a group. Women are statistically overrepresented in demographic ageing, therefore the incidences of poverty in elderly women would be higher

than in elderly men. However, elderly women are subjected to further social and economic discrimination than younger women through poverty inducing gaps, such as; education, literacy, and savings (ibid). Therefore, what other demographic variables need to be considered by the thesis?

2.1.2 Furthering the feminisation of poverty construct

Chant (2007;2008;2010) found that, the feminisation of poverty was associated with women becoming increasingly more responsible for the household's livelihood – the feminisation of responsibility and/or obligations, which include the disarticulation between rights and rewards, women's responsibilities are increasing but their agency, bargaining-power, personal freedom, autonomy and emotional well-being is decreasing (334). Research done by Brydon (2010), supported Chant's findings, the feminisation of family responsibility in contemporary Ghana.

The weaknesses of the classic feminisation of poverty construct have been addressed. However, the critical arguments that reject the validity of the findings of the classic construct are synonymous with the arguments that reject the validity of the poverty line's adequacy to define poverty. Radoki (1999) argues that monetising any forms of deprivation produces arbitrary assumptions that are meaningless:

‘It is clear from research on the perceptions and definitions of poverty used by the poor, first, that poverty is not defined solely in terms of income but encompasses deprivation and insecurity; secondly, that any attempt to place monetary values on these aspects of personal, household and social deprivation involves so many arbitrary assumptions that they are likely to be meaningless; and thirdly, that those defined as poor in consumption terms may not capture all deprived and vulnerable households and individuals’ (316).

Chant (2007;2010) argues that the feminisation of poverty can be theoretically developed based on her research on the feminisation of poverty in The Gambia, Costa Rica, and the Philippines. Chant argues that, there was not sufficient evidence to support the generalisable feminisation of income poverty, or that female income poverty is growing relative to men's, or that the rise in female headship is associated to the feminisation of poverty, however, the data supported a trend to the ‘feminisation of responsibility and/or obligation’ (333). Therefore, the notion would need to move towards a holistic livelihood

definition of poverty, whereby, income deprivation is an aspect of poverty. Accepting the above criticism of the classic approach and female headship, is it possible to further the thesis from the perspective of rural female-headed households? And, is it possible to build on the arguments made by Chant below?

Chant's feminisation of responsibility and/or obligations is based on three main empirical observations in her comparative research. The first observation is on the 'growing gender disparities in the range and amount of labour invested in household livelihoods' (334). Women of all ages are increasing their paid productive work outside the household while still being primarily responsible for the majority of unpaid reproductive familial work. Chant found that, although women were increasing their share of productive work, this trend was not juxtaposed to men increasing their contribution to unpaid reproductive work in the diminution of their productive work. Chant further found that this trend correlated with 'time-use studies', whereby women's paid, and unpaid work was collectively higher than men's, indicating that men have more personal time at their disposal. The argument correlating time and poverty is not new and was first introduced by Vickery (1977) arguing that poverty is a utility of time. Time is segregated by gender and attributed to reproductive and productive labour to support the household. Various UN studies have found that analysing how time is allocated allows for better insights into intra-household dynamics (Blackden and Wodon, 2006). Chant equally found that across all ages men's overall contribution to the household's livelihood is less than that of women. Further-to-that, there is a risk if a man's income (or contribution) stagnates, the household will steadily become more impoverished over time (ibid).

Kabeer (1994) argues that women's privation is associated with household privation. Chant (ibid) also found that neoliberal reforms demanded a higher rate of women's investment into the survival of the household. The neo-liberal reforms have resulted in diminishing food, water, transport, and energy subsidies (in urban areas), mass unemployment and a decrease in real incomes. Subsequently, living standards, particularly in urban areas, dramatically fell and social inequalities rapidly increased. Brydon (2010) found in her research in Ghana for over forty years that, the government policy reforms (neo-liberal reforms) were not gender-neutral and resulted in women increasing their contribution to the household's 'livelihood' (119). Brydon's (2010) research supported Chant's findings, the feminisation of family responsibility in contemporary Ghana. Traditional gender responsibilities were not renegotiated, and women adopted the traditional obligations of men such as, 'purchasing

clothes, shoes, paying for school fees', while still being responsible for their reproductive obligations (ibid). Over time this has become widely accepted in Ghana, limiting or removing women's personal time. Brydon refers to this as the feminisation of family responsibility (ibid). From this the following questions emerge; can this behaviour be observed in rural communities in other countries? What are the socio-cultural implications of men absconding their familial obligations? And, how does this behaviour extend to female-headed households? Arguments pertaining to the impacts of government macro-economic policy reform (neo-liberal policies) go beyond the restructuring of intra-household gender responsibilities and include the exploitation of women's roles within the community. During times of economic restructuring and reduction in social spending, women's volunteering within the community to care for other community member's children and assist with other reproductive tasks have now become the norm (Lind, 2010). How does this social behaviour shape the community relationships between women? And, is this behaviour adopted into their livelihood strategies?

Chant's second observation is the 'persistent and/or growing disparities in women's and men's capacities to negotiate gendered obligations and entitlements in households' (334). Chant found that, although women's overall contribution to the household was rapidly increasing, and, at times, women, become the household's sole breadwinner, this did not correspond to an increase in their intra-household bargaining power or agency. Women were not able to successfully renegotiate their personal and/or their spouse's overall household inputs that transcend any traditional gender norms and responsibilities:

'Regardless of their declining shares of household effort, many men withheld earnings to fund extra-domestic pursuits. These may include fraternising with other male companions, drinking, engaging in extra-marital affairs and/or gambling' (335).

Therefore, intra-household bargaining power and agency is not legitimised through household contributions, but, rather, through established gender norms. Kabeer (2005) argues that agency is a representation of the processes by which decisions are made and executed. Agency is the ability to choose, however, choice is an abstract term that only exists if there are alternatives to choose differently. Agency is executed through resources and measured in achievements. 'Resources are the medium through which agency is exercised; and achievements refer to the outcomes of agency' (14). Moser (2016) refers to agency as the ability to apply endowments to 'take action that affects a person's or household's well-being' (6). Therefore, agency is the ability to assert control over, and

application of, resources to achieve an intended outcome. Agency begins in the household; the ability to have command over intra-household resources and how they are distributed. Agency is related to power, Kabeer argues that it embodies both positive and negative attributes. It is, the ability to make, and enact on, life decisions that may be opposed by another person – the ‘power to’. The negative attribute is the ‘power over’ when people use varying means (violence, intimidation) to exert control over others’ agency (14). However, cultural norms may appropriate that power inequalities do not exist or that they are not unjust behind the banner of tradition. ‘Power relations are most effective when they are not perceived as such’(ibid). Gender often embodies structures of power that go unchallenged and accepted as the social norm removing women’s ability to make life choices such as: if or whom to marry; where and how to live; how many children to have; where to go (ibid). Power, therefore, is an abstract boundary that defines women’s claim over space and resources. Kabeer argues that ‘poverty and disempowerment’ share commonalities that limit a person’s ability to meet their ‘basic needs’ making them dependent on others, thereby influencing their choices (2005:14).

Chant’s third finding, ‘across country case studies, is an increasing disarticulation between investment/responsibilities and rewards/rights. Chant argues that while women’s share of reducing household poverty is increasing, this did not correlate with an increase in their rights and rewards, whether ‘material or non-material’ (ibid). Women’s overall burdens are increasing both inside and outside the household and they are not matched to increasing their personal benefits, such as, ‘personal time, freedom, or becoming more individualistic and autonomous’ (ibid). Chant is arguing that, although women’s personal and household investments are higher than men’s, this does not translate into greater personal and household gains for women. Men are still able to lay claim over their spouse’s/daughter’s/sister’s labour, time, and income. Johnsson-Latham (2004;2010) argues that girls’ entitlements are different to boys from the onset through perceptions of male-privilege and power. Boys are not only entitled to greater material advantages (food, healthcare) but, non-material advantages too, such as the ‘right to play and have fun’ (2010;41). Johnsson-Latham argues that this is central to ‘developing boys’ self-confidence and perception of superior rights’ (ibid). Moore (2010) argues that shifts in intra-household resources ownership and agency intersect with evolving gender identities. Therefore, women’s increasing contributions does not axiomatically shift the gender power relations. Chant summarises this eloquently:

‘Men on the other hand, despite declining inputs to the household livelihoods, are managing to retain their traditional privileges and prerogatives, including the exercise of authority, and resource draining escape routes. This constitutes a disturbing scenario in which investments are becoming progressively detached from rights and rewards, and perceptibly evolving into new and deeper forms of gender inequality’(ibid).

Chant (2007;2010) argues that to develop the feminisation of poverty as a theoretical construct it needs to be applied to a livelihoods framework. Firstly, its classical construction focussing only on income deprivation needs to be abandoned. Arguably, focussing solely on income deprivation obscures the discussion from gender inequalities. Income privation is an aspect of poverty, an analysis of how women generate an income would provide better insight into the workings of the household, the community, and macroeconomic policy. Secondly, the feminisation of poverty construct must focus on livelihoods embracing a multidimensional approach to poverty. Moghadam (1997) argues that it is ‘poverty-inducing capabilities and entitlements’ that restrict women’s access to education, property rights and labour markets, poor remuneration, and heavier reproductive work (cited in Chant, 2007: 79). Poverty is a ‘manifestation of inequality’ within societies, it is the subject of many causes such as unequal income, ethnicity, location, and, gender-inequality (Kabeer, 2011:527).

Thirdly, the feminisation of poverty needs ‘to examine how wealth (and its associated prerogatives and privileges) might be masculinising in a context, in which, on paper gender gaps in capabilities appear to be narrowing’ (2010:115). This can, therefore, look for trends in the data that indicate that women’s capabilities are becoming equal to men’s, however, as their capabilities are increasing their vulnerability is not decreasing. How wealth is defined is contextual and localised to a region, in the case of this research, rural regions.

Fourthly, would be to examine the impacts of policy interventions that adopt an instrumentalist approach to development, and to what extent this may, or may not, disenfranchise women. Molyneux (2007) argues that micro-credit and conditional cash transfer programmes can add disproportionately to women’s burdens as cited in (Chant, 2010). Therefore, the construct would need to incorporate the impacts of macroeconomic policy on women’s privation. Moore (2010) argues that programs which aim to increase women’s income have at times further disenfranchised women who ‘inhabit multicomplex relationships embedded in long-run distributions of power, access and resources’ (35).

2.2 Livelihoods from a gender perspective

The multidimensional approach to poverty owes its origination to Amartya Sen's (1981; 1987; 1999) 'entitlements and capabilities' which brought to light what resources 'entitlements' are available to the poor which help them to 'withstand short- and long-term shocks' (Chant and McLlwaine, 2009:193).

'As well as income from wage labour, entitlements may refer to public goods such as health care and basic services, or private income from the sale of assets and resources from own production such as food, social security claims, and so on'(ibid).

Sen's entitlements thesis argues that entitlements are based on the 'ownership of' and the 'ownership structure' that legitimises ownership of the entitlement. Entitlements refer to the individual's claim and command over resources within a society, however, the distribution of resources follow a myriad of complex social systems that legitimise resource ownership (Kabeer, 1994). It is the embedded unequal social systems that disenfranchise groups of people from actively participating in the decision-making process and challenging entitlement claims (ibid). The causation of poverty is not only 'inadequate entitlements' but structured social inequalities (140). Sen (1990) reviewed the legitimisation of entitlements to include social norms that sanction resources ownership within the household as cited in (Kabeer, 1994). Sen (1999) further argues that poverty is also a result of the poor's 'lack of choice' capabilities and 'achievements' functionings, not just the absence of material objects (ibid). Capabilities was further developed into the capabilities approach which expanded the definition of poverty to what is relevant to the lives of the poor, by incorporating factors such as access to 'drinking water, sanitation, shelter, clothing, and social aspects (community participation and self-respect)' (Kabeer, 2003:84; Chant, 2007). Further-to-that, capabilities provide the space for gender and 'blurs the distinction between ends and means' in the poverty debate (Kabeer, 2003:84). Capabilities incorporate the individual as well as the household thereby providing measurable development yardsticks (ibid). The most notable influences are the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (Kabeer, 2003). Therefore, to contribute to furthering the feminisation of poverty into a construct as argued above, this research will approach the feminisation of poverty from Moser's (1998;2007;2009;2016) capital asset accumulation framework.

The entitlements and capabilities approach has been adapted into different livelihood frameworks and asset-based studies that focus 'on what the poor have rather than what they don't have'; Moser's (1998; 2007;2008) 'asset vulnerability framework', Rakodi's (1999) 'capital assets framework', DIFD's (1998) 'sustainable livelihoods framework'⁴ (Chant & McIlwaine, 2009:179), and Kabeer's (1999;2005) 'gender empowerment framework' (Moser; 2016:7). A livelihood is defined to consist of the 'capabilities, capital assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living'. Livelihoods, therefore, are considered to be sustainable when an individual or households is able to cope and sustain shocks and improve their present and future capabilities without depleting their 'natural resource base' as stated by Carney (1998:2, cited in Rakodi, 1999:316). The livelihood perspective, therefore, provides for better insight about poverty by empirically demonstrating how poor women manage their assets in order to survive than the reductive poverty line approach. Therefore, a livelihoods perspective addresses the coping strategies of the poor and how they manage their household resources and assets. However, Deere (2010) argues, that the majority of livelihood/asset based studies have not 'gendered beyond the usual female to male headship measure' (347). Assets are categorised as; human, financial, social, physical and natural capital assets, and are 'tangible and intangible, and individual or collective depending on asset type' (Moser, 2016:3). However, Whitehead (2002) argues that the conceptualisation of assets does not embody one singular theoretical concept; it is a multidisciplinary approach that deconstructs the resources and livelihoods of the poor. Livelihood approaches are essentially 'actor-focused' placing the needs and strategies of the poor at the centre of the poverty debate (576). Rakodi (1999) argues that capital asset frameworks are a measure to codify the multiple resources on which a household's livelihoods depend. Therefore, the benefit of livelihood frameworks allows for better insight into the effects of macrosocial institutional development policies and a multi-dimensional view of poverty. The varying livelihood approaches focus on what assets the poor have 'rather than what they do not have', thereby providing a 'holistic' method to how the poor navigate 'survival' (ibid). Moser (1998;2007;2010;2016), Rakodi (1999), Chant (2007;2010) define capital assets as:

'Physical capital is categorised as; infrastructure, housing, utilities, and equipment.
Financial capital is defined as the available financial resources, credit and savings.
Human capital is defined as; education and vocational skills attainment, nutrition

⁴ Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DIFD) are no longer using this approach.

and health. Labour is closely associated with ‘human capital investments, nutrition and health care determines people’s capacity to work, and education and skills determine the returns from their labour’. Social capital is as an intangible asset defined as the ‘rules, norms obligations, reciprocity, and trust embedded in social relations, social structures, and societies institutional arrangements. It is embedded at the micro-institutional level (communities and households) as well as in the rules and regulations governing formalised institutions in the marketplace, political system, and civil society. Natural capital is categorised as; arable land, water, and environment’ (Moser, 2010:392).

The above list of capital assets reflects the main resource categories in the literature, however, if the categorisation were to be approached from a different context, would the categories remain the same? Or is there space for another capital asset category?

2.2.1 Gender and vulnerability

Chant and McLlwayne (2009) argue that closely related to entitlements and capabilities is vulnerability. The poor are vulnerable when they have limited assets at their disposal, therefore, ‘it is possible to be relatively well-off in income terms, yet be vulnerable, due, for example, to lack of savings, lack of land and property ownership, and limited access to publicly subsidised services such as education and health care’ (Chant and McLlwayne, 2009:194). The concept of vulnerability is complex and at times not well-defined making it difficult to provide a universal definition that is applicable to every discourse (Birkmann, 2007). Kabeer (2014) situates ‘vulnerability within agency and capabilities, relating to the choices that people can exercise and the capabilities they can draw on in the face of shocks and stresses’ (2).

In a working paper published by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC, 2003), vulnerability to poverty is defined as those who are at risk of entering into poverty as a result of ‘economic, political, and social processes’ (Prowse, 2003:7). CPRC studies (Dercon, 1999; Yaquab, 2000; Okidi & Mugambe, 2002) showed that a higher number of households move in and out of poverty over time than households that are in a permanent state of poverty – chronic poverty. The CPRC refer to households with upward and downward mobility as the churning or occasionally poor and households that are in a constant state of poverty as the chronically poor (ibid). This, therefore, has implications on the data collected at the poverty line. It has been established that the poverty line analyses the household as a singular unit

assuming that the distribution of resources is equal. This failing of the approach places the analysis of gender and poverty solely between female and male-headed households disregarding women within male-headed households (Deere, 2010). It is, possible to argue that the gender dynamics within the household can keep women in chronic poverty when the household experiences upward mobility.

The CPRC's vulnerability as a symptom of poverty is defined as being vulnerable to shocks, as a household may not have sufficient resources to sustain shocks, thus their vulnerability to shocks is a cause of poverty (Prowse, 2003). Vulnerability within the multi-dimensional poverty narrative refers to the poor's ability to react to; risks, negative social and political changes, and environmental and/or economic shocks. This is therefore of particular importance when discussing food security and the impacts shocks have on women. Vulnerability relates to the various coping strategies the poor employ to manage their households through mobilising their assets to meet both short- and long-term needs (Chant and McLlwaine, 2009). What are the coping strategies of women during times of food insecurity? In times of economic crisis women have been 'shock absorbers' through their role in the reproductive economy, Elson (1991) cited in (Molyneux, 2002), argues that this is the gendered cost of macro-economic policies. However, in times of crisis, gender roles may be altered whereby men may take on female tasks and, vice versa, or the existing gender norms may be reinforced – gender norms are not forever fixed (Elson, 2010). However, as mentioned in the previous section, assuming the household to be a single equitable unit makes gender and intra-household poverty invisible.

Kabeer (1994) argues that poverty is not only the insufficiency of assets but includes 'structurally reproduced distributional inequalities'. It is the socially constructed norms and traditions that structure the 'unequal division of social and economic space' that disenfranchise women's ability to independently 'mobilise their resources'. Therefore, for women to meet their basic needs is entrenched within their 'contractual relations of family and kinship' (141). Further-to-that, Kabeer (1994) found that even when women are able to independently control their assets, they do it within a manner that does not unsettle their gendered-entitlements. Arguably, Kabeer is referring to how women are able to control their resources within their prescribed gender roles, and that women will not disperse of their assets in a manner that would negatively affect their familial and community relations, their social capital. Therefore, women manage their vulnerability differently to men because poverty is experienced unequally (ibid).

Harris (2007) cited in (Moser, 2016) argues, that poverty is a 'social relation, not an absolute condition' of various power relations. Moser (2016) argues that assets are embedded in 'social relations and structures, and power relations all of which negotiate access to assets and the accumulation of their value' (7). Moser is arguing that the poor's access to assets constructs their vulnerability, and their vulnerability shapes what assets are available to them. Therefore, the accumulation of assets is in a constant state of negotiation and renegotiation subjected to structured power relations. Poverty and vulnerability are intertwining concepts, people in poverty are vulnerable, and there are people who are vulnerable to poverty. However, vulnerability also embodies 'gender and ethnic dimensions', in that both groups may be subjected to discrimination (Chant and McIlwaine, 2009:194). The construction of gender 'collectively marginalises women and girls as a group, and as a sub-group of other marginalised groups – age – geography – people with disabilities – social class (Rosche, 2016). This type of vulnerability is associated with social exclusion, whereby particular individuals and social groups are excluded from their community or wider society. Thus, entitlements, vulnerability, social exclusion provide a more complex picture of poverty reinforcing that poverty is a multi-dimensional construct (ibid).

2.3 Multi-dimensional asset accumulation framework

This section will interrogate Moser's multi-dimensional asset accumulation framework. Moser's (2016) asset accumulation framework builds on previous research on asset vulnerability and asset adaptation (Moser, 1998;2007;2008;2009). Moser (2011) asset adaptation framework to climate change incorporates two analysis components; asset vulnerability and asset adaptation. The framework builds on earlier research on asset vulnerability, asset adaptation and urban poverty reduction (Moser, 1988;2007;2009; Moser and Felton, 2007;2010) as well as preliminary climate change-related work (Moser and Satterthwaite, 2008) and (Moser *et al.*, 2010). Asset vulnerability is the analysis of the 'types of socio-economic vulnerability and groups most affected by climate related disasters' (Moser, 2011;225). Asset adaptation identifies the 'bottom-up climate change coping strategies at individual, household and community level'. The examination of vulnerability requires the identification of the 'threat, resilience and recovery' from the changing environment (Moser, 2007;2011).

Moser (2016) argues that an asset accumulation framework can be used in two ways. Firstly, as a diagnostic analytical tool, an 'asset index' to measure how assets are accumulated, adapted, or eroded over time and qualifying the 'interrelationship between assets – asset portfolio'. Secondly, as an 'asset accumulation policy' focussed as an 'operational instrument' that creates 'opportunities for low-income people to accumulate and sustain complex asset portfolios' (5). The duality of Moser's framework permits for an analysis of how assets are accumulated from the household's (including the individual's) perspective, and for an analysis of how policies can facilitate (and/or inhibit) asset accumulation. Moser highlights that the processes to household (and individual) asset accumulation intersects with macrosocial institutional policies.

However, it is, important to acknowledge Moser's framework sets-out to argue the relationship between gender, asset accumulation and transformational pathways to equitable cities, to what Moser refers to as, just-cities. This framework is the foundation for Moser's 'gendered asset pathways to empowerment and transformation that contribute to achieving more equal, just cities' (2). However, this research does not intend to argue the transformational pathways to equitable communities, as this goes beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, the aspects of Moser's framework that focus on transformational pathways will be adapted or removed from this research's application of the framework. This raises the following question:

- a) does applying the framework to rural context have any conceptual implications on the overall framework?

The framework consists of two interconnected components (6). First, the framework separates the accumulation of assets into three essential stages or generations of which Moser refers to as the following:

- a) first-generation asset accumulation strategies,
- b) second-generation asset accumulation strategies, and
- c) third -generation asset accumulation strategies.

These various asset-generations are accumulated, adapted and eroded through three interrelated processes which Moser refers to as the following:

- a) the driving forces,
- b) the intermediary factors (barriers), and
- c) the outcomes.

Assets are not acquired in isolation; they are interdependent and contextual. The first-generation strategy focuses on access to basic needs, that includes physical (shelter, infrastructure), natural (land, water), human (food, health, education), and financial capital (micro-finance).

‘First –generation strategy is by far the most widespread and aims to access assets that focus on the provision of basic needs including water, roads, electricity, housing plots, better health care and education and micro-finance. Essential for getting out of poverty and inequality is this primary emphasis on human, physical, and financial capital’ (Moser, 2016:6).

Although, Moser recognises the importance of social capital, it is not listed above as an essential first-generation strategy. Therefore, would the application of the framework to a rural context alter the essential first-generation asset strategy? The second-generation strategy is to ‘further asset accumulation and prevent erosion, including intergenerational asset transfer’ (Moser, 2016:6). This stage incorporates the provision and evolving legal system, that protects individual’s rights and security. The third generation is to ‘maximise the outcomes between inter-dependent assets to bring about empowerment and transformation’ (ibid). However, Moser argues that empowerment is dependent on the type of value the asset accumulated – intrinsic or instrumental. Although, individual empowerment does not necessarily dislodge gender power relations on a wider scale. However, as this research is not investigating the empowerment and transformation as such, the focus here will be on maximising coping and livelihood strategies. This raises another conceptual question, how do coping and livelihood strategies shape, accumulation, adaptation and erosion of assets? To address these questions this research will incorporate the asset adaption coping strategies from Moser’s (1998).

The first processes are the ‘driving forces’ in the wider ‘structural context’ of a society. This is related to ‘macroeconomic policies and globalisation, demographic transition, planning and urban spatial agglomeration, environmental factors (particularly climate change), political change, violence and insecurity’ that impact how assets are acquired, adapted, and eroded. The driving forces in this research refer to the ecological landscape. Driving forces are not static, they change over time and are contextual. The driving forces act as constraints and/or opportunities that ‘influence the capacity to accumulate assets’ (10-11). Arguably, adapting Moser’s framework from an urban analysis to rural alters the structural context of the driving forces. In a rural context, geographic location would, therefore, be the

overarching structural driving force shaping an area's asset portfolio in relation to policies, planning, environmental factors, and security.

The geographical location of rural communities determines the availability of natural and physical assets, and the type of economic opportunities a household has access to (Radoki, 1999). An analysis of the geographic location would, therefore, require an analysis of the assets' fragility to other driving forces particularly climate-related hazards. Rural communities that are isolated by means of limited infrastructure (roads, health care, schools, utilities) in areas of agricultural production (natural capital) do not have access to the same economic opportunities as well-connected communities (ibid). Natural capital is essential for rural communities to sustain their livelihoods; land, water, and other environmental resources (Carney, 1998; Booth et al., 1998 cited in Rakodi, 1999). The availability of physical and natural assets is therefore closely associated with macrosocial institutional development policies. In the economic geography literature, much importance is placed on geographic location in relation to economic prosperity (Bosker and Garretsen, 2010). The literature refers to the effects of geographic location on economic development relative to productivity, disease, and the availability of natural resources/capital (ibid). Rakodi (1999) further argues that the household's survival is subjected to the wider macroeconomic and social systems that govern access to resources. Macrosocial institutional arrangements influence the livelihood strategy of the household (and individual) to adjust how they manage their assets to secure their future well-being (ibid).

Arguably, driving forces such as economic and environmental shocks that threaten food security force households to adapt their food intake thus eroding nutrition endowments making the household vulnerable to malnutrition. Research by 'FAO (2008) and UNICEF(2009)' found that during shocks women's share in household food consumption dramatically declines due to their involvement in food preparation and management (Uraguchi, 2010:492). Uraguchi (2010) argues that gender inequality makes women and children more vulnerable to food insecurity. Vulnerable households manage their assets from an insecure position which requires foresight and planning, especially with regards to food security (Kabeer, 1994). Therefore, how do women manage their assets, and what are the coping strategies of female-headed households to sustain external shocks?

The second processes are 'intermediary factors' this relates to actors and institutions at the local level, public, private, NGO, organisations that are able to assist or inhibit asset

accumulation, adaption, and erosion (Moser, 2016). Moser recognises socio-cultural norms as a facet of the intermediary factors, however, because the focus of the framework is urban, there is a precedence on macrosocial institutional arrangements over microsocial institutional arrangements:

‘These institutions are critical in ‘providing and enabling environment; while the state can establish normative and legal frameworks that can either block initiatives or provide incentives, private sector entities, including micro-finance institutions, support opportunities and facilitate access to promote asset accumulation. Since the processes of accumulating assets involve complex political contestation, national and local level non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and membership-based organisations (MBOs), are critical in collective action, the creation of community social capital, and as brokers to negotiate social power relations associated with transformative processes’ (7).

This is closely related to the existence and strength of social and political capital, and how it is exercised to achieve an intended outcome. The constraints and/or opportunities location has on women’s ability to negotiate access to assets is embedded in local socio-cultural norms that construct gender entitlements in both physical and social space. The construction of human behaviour is a product of ‘institutional rules, norms and conventions’ that impact how people live and manage their assets (Kabeer, 2003:47). Institutional rules can be ‘explicit or implicit, written or unwritten, codified in law, sanctioned by religious doctrine, and is embedded in the family, community and society’ (ibid). Institutions are abstract concepts, Kabeer (2003) identified four main groups; ‘kinship/family, civil society/community, markets, and states that govern processes, production, reproduction and distribution in a society’ (ibid). Kabeer defines the four social institutions as follows:

‘Kinship and family refer to forms of social organisation, including lineages and clans, that are based on descent, marriage and various forms of adoption and fostering. Community refers to associations and groups based on primordial ties. Membership of these groups is ascribed rather than chosen. Individuals’ access to their resources depends on how they are positioned in the group by these ascribed identities. Civil society refers to a range of associations whose members pursue a variety of interests. The membership and goals are usually chosen, and members determine how resources and responsibilities will be distributed on the basis of some agreed set of principles. Markets are organised around a commercial logic – the maximisation of profit – and resources are exchanged on the basis of contract-based entitlements. The state is responsible for the overall governance of society. It enforces the rules and procedures that regulate how the different institutional domains interact’ (2003:48).

It is, therefore, the interaction between the different social institutions that influence what assets are available and how they are accessed. Asset accumulation is associated with agency, choice and gender, therefore, influences how assets are acquired through available choices and how agency is exercised. Sen (1999) argues (cited in Moser, 2016) that the acquisition of assets is associated with empowerment creating agency amongst individuals and communities. However, as Chant found in her argument for the feminisation of poverty, the acquisition of assets did not translate into increased household agency and rewards.

The third processes are the 'outcomes' of asset accumulation strategies' how assets evolve and adapt to the changing external political and natural environment (ibid). The acquisition of one asset will lead to the acquisition of another, however, the erosion of one asset will lead to the erosion of another (ibid). Moser is arguing that asset accumulation, adaption, and erosion are associated with the interaction between micro and macrosocial institutional arrangements structures, states, markets, civil society/community, and kinship/family. Here, this research will focus on what type of outcomes were achieved with a focus on the entitlements and obligations of women and how these outcomes shape the vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty. The following chapter will examine this in greater detail through the microsocial institutional arrangements of the household and community.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter set-out the overarching theoretical framework that will be used to examine the research aim and objectives. The chapter critically examined the feminisation of poverty and addressed the conceptual ambiguities of the thesis and located this research within the literature. Through this examination, various questions emerged to which this research aims to address to contribute to conceptually further the feminisation of poverty thesis. This is a summary of the key questions that emerged from the literature. Accepting the above criticism of the classic feminisation of poverty construct with female headship, is it possible to further the thesis from the perspective of rural female-headed households? How are gendered responsibilities and obligations renegotiated when men have absconded their familial responsibilities? Will there be any conceptual changes to the multi-dimensional asset accumulation framework through its rural application? How do the livelihood strategies of women shape the accumulation, adaptation and erosion of assets? The following chapter examines more closely the socio-cultural practices that shape the allocation of entitlements

and obligations within the household and community, and how these promote the vulnerability to poverty of female-headed households.

Chapter Three: Gender, Household & Community

3 Introduction

This chapter follows on from the previous chapter, with the aim of deepening the theoretical approach through close examination of the socio-cultural practices of the household and community. This chapter builds on the literature in chapter two by incorporating scholarship from feminist social anthropology, sociology, social psychology and feminist geography. Although this chapter addresses all three objectives, its focus is on the latter two. The chapter begins with an investigation of the microsocial institutional arrangements of the household, exploring the household's function as the primary unit of social reproduction and as an essential capital asset. The chapter then moves onto critically examining the institution of marriage which embodies a plethora of microsocial institutional arrangements that shape ascribed gendered entitlements and obligations; the prenuptial agreements, the marriage contract, the gender division of labour, the accumulation of first-and-second generation assets, and the rights of divorcees and widows. This section examines how these social arrangements shape women's sense of agency and well-being.

Following on from the institution of marriage, the next section gender and headship investigates the pathways to female headship and the vulnerability of female-headed households to asset erosion and poverty. This section introduces new arguments of Chant (2016), female-headed households as a portable asset. The chapter then moves onto examining community entitlements where it explores the socio-cultural practices within the community that promote the vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty, and the importance of social capital accumulation.

The chapter then moves onto critically examine gender and well-being. This part of the chapter is divided into three sections to investigate the human capital endowments that shape the vulnerability of women to poverty. Firstly, it explores gender and nutrition deprivation, focusing on the asymmetrical relationship between food consumption patterns and women. The following section gender and health deprivation explores the relationship between nutrition and health; both sections connect the vulnerability of women with the ecological landscape. The final section, gender and well-being investigates the socio-cultural practices that harm the physical, social and psychological well-being of women through the stress of poverty, harmful practices and violence against women.

Following on from this part, the chapter will examine the gender and labour entitlements. This section explores how the gender division of labour shapes the vulnerability of women to poverty. The concluding section of this chapter will reflect on the above literature and provide a summary of the subsequent questions that have arisen out of the analysis.

3.1 The household, family and kinship

Individual well-being begins in the household. It has been established that the household is the primary unit of analysis within the poverty discourse. The household is an abstract institutional structure codified by social norms shaping human behaviour prescribing what is permitted and prohibited (Kabeer, 2003). Household structures in Sub-Saharan Africa can be 'complex, lineage-based homesteads with considerable gender segmentation' (55). The household hierarchy intersects with age, gender, patrilineal or matrilineal norms. In the absence of formalised laws (completely absent or not enforced) women's access to property and land is embodied in 'socio-cultural/kinship' norms (Chant, 1997:95). The household is the primary unit of socialisation, it is, the space where cultural traditions are 'transmitted inter-generationally through norms and parental behaviour', intersecting with community social customs such as the 'division of labour, resource distribution, entitlements and capabilities, and the division of power' (Chant, 2007:163). Through the gender division of labour, the household is perceived to be private feminine space, juxtaposed with public space as masculine space. Day (2001) argues that the private-public space divide constructs the idea of physical dangers of public space which may 'encourage women to adhere to gendered social norms for behaviour that restrict their independence in public space' (109-110).

The household is a multifaceted entity, firstly, it is a physical asset that supports the development of individual human and social capital. Human capital is defined as an individual's ability to engage in productive labour based on investments in their education, skills, health, and nutrition (Rakodi, 1999; Moser and Felton, 2007; Moser, 2010). However, this research argues that human capital needs to include livelihood capabilities such as agency and individual rights, and the health endowment needs to incorporate both physical and psychological well-being. Secondly, the household's livelihood is dependent on the investment of human capital to engage in productive and reproductive labour. As argued by Chant (2007;2010) above, the nexus of household gendered obligations and investment

provide insights into the feminisation of poverty. Thirdly, the household is dependent on the presence of communal social capital and the access to financial capital. Moser's (2007;2009;2016) first-generation asset accumulation directly relates to the acquisition and functionality of the household. It embodies both tangible and intangible assets and ownership over how assets are produced and consumed. Kabeer (1994) argues that land and shelter are the most important assets and equally important is the ability to command those assets into different resources. However, the household may be vulnerable to powerful landlords in times when housing and land are scarce (ibid). The gender dynamics of the household mirrors the broader social dynamics of a community and wider society (Bird and Espey, 2010). Women's experience of poverty is different to men's because of their asymmetrical relationship to household-entitlements (Kabeer, 1994). Many women receive their entitlements through marriage and kingship, limiting their control over what they produce (labour) or what they own – physical assets (ibid). A woman's transition from daughter-to-wife-to-mother indicates her evolving social status to a male guardian and their decline of economic independence. Therefore, a death of a husband can lead a widow into poverty (Kabeer, 1994). Unequal household entitlements create poverty dimensions; poverty is therefore different for individual family members within the same household (ibid). How resources are acquired, owned, and distributed are essential to evaluating the feminisation of vulnerability to poverty. Moore (1988) argues that the household structure and composition shape the entitlements of women to 'gain access to resources, labour and income' (54-55). The household is an interconnecting space of family and kinship through the institution of marriage, it is a space that connects its members with the wider community. How does the institution of marriage ascribe gendered entitlements and obligations of women with respect to the household and community? How does the institution of marriage shape the livelihood strategies of women?

3.2 The institution of marriage

The institution of marriage embodies a plethora of microsocial institutional arrangements; the prenuptial agreements, the marriage contract, the gender division of labour, the accumulation of first-and-second generation assets, and the rights of divorcees and widows. Social anthropologist Moore (1988) argues that the relationship between marriage and property embodies two paradigms for women. The first paradigm is 'women as a type of property', the second is 'women's access to property'. In the work of Radcliffe-Brown (1950

cited in Moore, 1988), the marriage contract is the instrument where the husband and his kin 'acquire rights in the wife' (64). These rights pertain to two aspects, rights 'in the wife's labour and domestic duties (reproductive work) – in personae' and 'rights to sexual access – in rem' (65). Furthermore, in some cultures, these rights extend to the husband and his kin's right to the children (ibid). Men are, therefore, permitted through the marriage contract to exert power-over women's agency thereby taking ownership of their reproductive work through the established social norms. The right to sexual access removes women's agency over their own bodies; in some cultures, the notion of marital rape does not exist; it is perceived to be a woman's duty to her husband, and a man's right over his wife's body (ibid). There are several socio-cultural practices that contribute to the loss or removal of women's agency within the institution of marriage. Firstly, the age disparity between a husband and a wife is a major contributing factor to lower agency and household entitlements (Jensen and Thornton, 2003). Studies have shown that early marriage (under eighteen) has adverse impacts on women's 'physical, mental and emotional development and well-being', the onset of early childbirth, withdrawal from schooling, generally accompanied by a large age disparity between husband and wife (10). The socio-cultural norms underpinning early marriage eludes to the premise that a younger bride is easier to manipulate and control for the groom and his family (ibid). This, therefore, has detrimental effects on young girls' human capital development. Underage marriage also ensures the virginity of the daughter thereby maintaining the bride's family's honour within the community (Mikhail, 2002). It also acts as an *insurance policy* that the daughter is free from sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, the ascription of the family's honour on a young girls' virtue would need to be investigated. The following questions emerge. How does a socio-custom like this shape a young girl's sense of self-worth? And, how does this custom influence the socialisation of a young girl within the household? Jensen and Thornton (2003) found the gender implications for age disparity was a contributing factor to why men wanted to marry underage girls. The UN categorises underage and forced marriage as a harmful traditional practice that is akin to 'child trafficking' (Kouyaté, 2009:2). Further-to-that, marriage can be forced through abduction and kidnapping of young girls, this is quite common in many African cultures. However, sometimes the parents of the girl might be involved, and the abduction is usually accompanied by rape to ensure the marriage (ibid). This, therefore, places forced marriage within the parameters of gender-based violence.

Patrilocality or virilocality is a socio-cultural custom that requires the bride to leave her 'natal home' to move in with the groom's family as a 'stranger bride' (Kabeer, 2014:14). However,

the practice of this cultural norm brings into question the social mobility of women and the institution of marriage. The bride may at times have to migrate to the neighbouring village, where she is isolated from her family thus becoming completely dependent on her husband and his family for financial and emotional support. This cultural practice erodes girls' social capital stock and can exacerbate their vulnerability to domestic violence (ibid). Therefore, she would need to replenish her lost social capital through establishing new social networks and community relationships through rigidly complying to local customs. Two questions emerge, how do girls (and women) prevent erosion of their social capital, and does patrilocality influence how women establish interpersonal relationships with each other? Patrilocality could also be a contributing factor that reduces a woman's human capital endowments such as; employment opportunities, access to health care, and reduced standard of living (physical capital). The bride may move into a geographically poor and underdeveloped location. In some cultures, the husband is responsible to financially provide for his wife, and he may be required to give her kin group some continual means of 'labour and goods' in payment for the loss of a daughter. These exchanges are embedded in the socio-cultural norms that govern what both parties are expected to bring into the marriage, and what each party acquires through the marriage (Moore, 1988). From this, three questions emerge; what are the customary rights and obligations of women within the marriage contract? What are the rights of divorcees and widows on the dissolution of the marriage contract? And, to what extent do the legal statutory rights (if any) embedded in the formal marriage contract (including its dissolution) proceed traditional marriage contracts? This research will address the above questions through the application of Moser's asset accumulation framework.

The second paradigm- women's access to property- is explained through the cultural practices of dowries and bride-wealth transactions. Dowry-systems vary from culture to culture; there are different social norms, which govern the dowry transaction (Moore, 1988). Dowries are supposed to be a transaction to protect women's property-rights within the marriage contract, however, it is a system that makes women subordinate to men. Property-rights is a broad term, and in most cultures, refers to movable properties such as household products, and not fixed property – land (ibid). In patrilineal cultures, women's land inheritance passes to their husband or his kin group, or an older male family member within her family. Whatever governs the system of exchange, women do not have direct control over their assets (Moore, 1988). How do patrilineal customs shape second-generation intergenerational asset transfer? In most instances, the dowry received from the loss of a

daughter usually pays for the son's future wife's dowry (Mikhail, 2002). Bride-wealth transactions like dowries are culture-specific. It is the transfer of valuable goods such as money and livestock, from the groom to the bride's family (Moore, 1988). It is a payment for the bride. In many instances the underage brides do not receive any tangible benefits from this transaction, the payment is given to her parents (Mikhail, 2002). In times of economic hardship, families will sell off their daughters to reduce the economic burden on the household (Jensen and Thornton, 2003). This is argued in some cultures as a rational coping mechanism to ensure the survival of the bride's household (ibid). However, there are culturally specific aspects that determine the bride's price such as; age, education, and among others, which is negotiated by the men in the household (Moore, 1988). Who is responsible to oversee the prenuptial negotiations of children in female-headed households? Bride-wealth transactions can extend to the husband including his kin's right over the children in the case of divorce or death the children pass to the husband or his kin. In some cultures, in the event of a divorce, the bride's father will have to repay the groom's kin. The amount is dependent on how many children the bride bore her husband, and if she fulfilled her duty the repayment is less than the initial amount paid to the bride's family (ibid). However, in some circumstances when a girl wants a divorce she will experience 'isolation or abandonment', and in some instances punishment or death threats (in extreme cases) from her family (Mikhail, 2002). Religion plays a central role in the household, the community, and the State (Moore, 1988). In some countries, religious customs serve as an ideological position in State law. It legitimises formal and informal laws that govern education, employment, the role of women, and the family. This legitimisation is seen in the context of divinity. Divorce is not recognised in Catholicism, in Islam men have the right to divorce their wives by saying I divorce you three times. The practice of polygamy is accepted in Mormonism and Islam. Moore (ibid) argues that religious fundamentalism and women's emancipation are opposing concepts. The role of the state and legal system is essential to women who wish to divorce their husbands. Civil codes are an important measure for the advancement of women's rights, as they provide the overarching legal framework.

3.3 Gender and headship

The processes to female headship provide insights into gender and poverty. Pathways to the formation of female-headed households vary through, widowhood, divorce, separation, non-marriage and polygamy. However, the pathways to female-headship through, non- marriage,

divorce, and separation are more common in urban areas than rural (Chant, 2016). Various studies have found that female-headed households are more likely to house members from the extended family than male-headed households (Chant, 1997). The extended members can aid with reproductive work, additional access to income and other productive assets (ibid). The rise of female-headed households does not necessarily mean 'emancipation from male power particularly whereby women are identified as subordinate' (Elson, 1992:42). In many instances the absence of a male spouse can leave women worse-off, men socially represent the ability to access and mobilise resources (ibid). Female-headed households may have limited social capital due to severed ties with their ex-partner's family, or 'mistrust they have with their own family or community' (Chant, 2007:102). In some cases, separation and divorce can bring shame and dishonour to the family, some women may be ostracised or choose to stay away from their family to maintain family honour within the community (ibid). Further-to-that, women may not be able to nurture community relationships due to managing both reproductive and productive work obligations. In some circumstances, women may out of necessity choose to reduce their community relationships in order to limit reciprocity customs. Female-headed households might be more vulnerable to material and land asset accumulation (Chant, 2016). Complications may arise when women's access to land and property is dependent on men and they may be at risk of forfeiting their assets as a result of divorce, widowhood, abandonment and male-migration. Koster's (2010) study on land access in Rwanda found that women are vulnerable to customary laws that inhibit their inheritance to land. Many widow's rights to land were conditional and land grabbing from women was common (137). From this the following questions emerge; how do female-headed households secure their assets on the dissolution of the marriage contract? And, how do female-headed households replenish (or accumulate) essential capital assets, such as land and housing?

Contrary, to the notion that female-headed households are the poorest of the poor. Studies have shown that children's human capital development fares better in female-headed-households Buvinić and Gupta (1997), Chant and Craske (2003) and Chant (2007). This is because intra-household resources are distributed more equally, and greater investments are made in children's nutrition and education endowments, particularly for daughters. The absence of a male spouse results in less resource-draining behaviour such as expenditure on entertaining male friends, purchasing tobacco and alcohol (Chant and McLlwaine, 2009). Further-to-that, it has highlighted the importance of 'women's capacity to command and allocate resources' within the household, providing insights into the 'complex relationship

between women's access to resources and empowerment' (Chant, 2007:34). This raises a question, to what extent are gendered socio-cultural customs reproduced in female-headed households? In patriarchal communities, female-headed households without 'co-resident spouse' may be stigmatised as 'unfortunate' or even 'deviant'. The stigmatisation may extend to the children in the household, particularly to the boys, who are perceived to be 'deprived' of a 'male role model' (Chant, 2016:30). This could have long term negative impacts on their son's social status within the community and limit his ability to develop social networks. The household is also a productive asset for women, particularly for women who run informal businesses from their homes or generating income from renting out rooms. Furthermore, the household can be used as collateral to help women secure financial credit (Cook, 2007). What informal business opportunities are available to women in rural areas (markets)? However, urban female-headed households are in a better position than their rural counterparts. Women in urban areas have higher incomes, land and housing pass through the 'market (state)' bypassing customary allocation of rights that discriminate against women. Further-to-that, female-headed households are more visible in urban areas and can access greater benefits from the state (Chant, 2016:28). Research in Chile has shown that greater access to housing through the state has increased female headship from twenty-percent in 1990 to forty-percent in 2011 (Ramm, 2014 in Chant, 2016). However, in Chant's most recent work on female headship, Chant (2016) argues that a female-headed household may be a portable asset. Chant is referring to female-headed households in the abstract sense and not as a physical asset. Chant argues that there is an array of intangible benefits such as; increasing women's agency, allowing women to leave bad marriages and escape domestic violence, bring about social change in communities that are hostile to female headship, improved intra-household resource distribution, and, increasing children's nutrition and education endowments. Further, Chant argues that as female headships increase, it can become a public asset, whereby overtime social norms that label women as incapable may begin to change (ibid). A few questions emerge, do female-headed households in rural areas experience a sense of increased agency, and how does it influence their relationship with the wider community?

3.4 Community entitlements

As mentioned above, Kabeer describes the community as an association and/or group based on primordial ties, whereby membership is ascribed and an individual's access to resources

is dependent on their position within the group associated to their ascribed identity. Therefore, the community is an abstract social institution, whereby membership is governed by localised social norms, rules and trust. Moore (2010) argues that the intangible symbolic assets that embody 'respect, influence and authority' are vitally important, and 'often link households and individual household members to the wider community' (Moore, 2010:36). Further, the community assists its members to access physical and natural resources through acquiring land titles to build their houses (Moser, 2007;2008;2010). However, embedded social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities in 'land use, access, control, ownership and inheritance' interconnect the household with the community (Bird & Espey, 2010:361). Women are at a disadvantage through patrilineal land ownership and inheritance systems (ibid). Jackson (2003) argues that women's improved ownership of natural capital (land) does not necessarily bring about transformations in gender relations. Therefore, how do social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities shape the livelihood strategies of female-headed households in the community? Arguably, social capital is an important asset to ensure the household's livelihood. The norms and traditions that 'underpin' social capital can 'be a source' of 'gender inequalities', the relationships can embody support and reciprocity while simultaneously be hierarchal (Maclean, 2010:572). However, the value of women's social capital would be based on networks they have access to within the community. Therefore, social capital itself embodies gender and the type of social capital available to men and women would be different. Mohan and Mohan (2002) argue that social capital should be separated from 'cultural capital', drawing on Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital as:

'...as possession of the cultural resources and skills necessary to participate in élite social interactions. There are likely to be connections, but cultural capital is thought of as a property of individuals' (192).

This definition is closer to social networks; however, Mohan and Mohan's argument is that there is a difference between social capital as a 'public good' and social networks which are the interests of a select group (ibid). However, social capital as an asset category encompasses a broad definition. Although, it is a capital asset which can be accumulated, adapted and eroded over time. Its value is acquired through the interaction of microsocial and macrosocial institutional arrangements. Willis (2010) argues that socio-economic status determines the type of social capital available to women. Willis found that most women in lower to upper middle social economic status were dependant on friends and non-resident kin to assist them with domestic responsibilities. However, the ability to access this social

network varied between them based on their ability to provide some form of remuneration. Further-to-that, the ability to access information regarding employment opportunities in the formal sector was concentrated in groups of women from the upper middle socio-economic sphere. Formal employment was based on women's education and skills attainment – human capital. Molyneux (2002) argues that women in low-income groups foster the strongest community bonds by establishing vast social networks and engaging in reciprocal relations. It is, the gendered division of labour that requires women to serve their 'families or communities', thus making women responsible for domestic and communal social reproduction (178). The division of labour constructed through cultural norms that identify women with motherhood and what is expected of them (ibid). Therefore, through the construction of motherhood, the ascribed obligations of women extend to activities that serve the community. Women are overrepresented in voluntary community programs on health, food and education, Molyneux refers to these as 'voluntary self-help schemes' (177). Therefore, the responsibility for maintaining community bonds and social capital falls disproportionately onto women (ibid).

3.5 Gender and well-being

This section will discuss human capital endowments associated with gender and basic needs. Gender and nutrition will examine *nutrition deprivation* and food security through Sen's (1981;1987;1999) entitlements approach. Following on from nutrition deprivation the section will investigate health deprivation examining gendered health endowments to include concepts of social well-being that incorporate the psychological impacts of gender-based violence. To avoid repetition education endowments are examined at the intersection of both nutrition and health.

3.5.1 Gender and nutrition deprivation

Kabeer (1994) refers to insufficient nutrition as 'physical deprivation' and is fundamental to poverty, 'manifesting chronic malnutrition, widespread hunger and low levels of life expectancy' (142). Malnutrition is defined by the World Food Programme (WFP) as:

'...a condition resulting when a person's diet does not provide adequate nutrients for growth and maintenance or when a person is not able to adequately utilise the food

consumed due to illness⁵.... hunger is not having enough to eat to meet energy requirements. Hunger can lead to malnutrition, but absence of hunger does not imply absence of malnutrition'⁶ (World Food Programme webpage, 2016).

For the purpose of this research, malnutrition and hunger is categorised as nutrition deprivation. However, nutrition deprivation is associated with the access to and availability of food (food security) and intra-household food distribution (Radoki, 1999). Female nutrition deprivation embodies gender inequalities governing how food is accessed and distributed within the household. The access to and distribution of food within the household is inherently unequal (Kabeer, 1994). Hillenbrand (2010) found that rates of extreme female malnutrition transcend social classes indicating strong practised gender inequality norms⁷. Gender inequality spurs unequal food distribution by prioritising male family members through practices such as; feeding men first, serving men the best and largest portions, and in times of food scarcity women may forego meals in order to feed their husbands and sons (Kabeer, 1994; Kent and MacRae, 2010). However, in some cultures, 'food taboos' are practised, it is a custom that prohibits women and children from eating 'rare foods', particularly meats, fish, and eggs (Kouyaté, 2009: 3). Food taboos are practised to manage scarce food stocks (ibid). However, in some cultures, the polar-opposite may occur through female 'forced-feeding'. Force-feeding is a social custom practised increasing the weight of young girls to fetch a higher dowry or bride price. Both customs food taboos and forced feeding are classified as harmful traditional practices (ibid). Female malnutrition is a fundamental aspect of female poverty. Cultural practices that command female altruism and self-sacrifice dictate how food is distributed (Kabeer, 1994). Intra-household socialisation reinforces gender inequality and constructions of female inferiority. Men are superior members in a household and require feeding. Kabeer (1994) argues that by comparing the 'source, frequency and content of meals can provide insight into the

⁵ Malnutrition encompasses both 'under-nutrition' (too thin, too short, micronutrient deficiencies) and 'over-nutrition' (overweight and obesity), which should actually be considered 'unbalanced nutrition' as it often co-occurs with micronutrient deficiencies' (World Food Programme webpage, 2016).

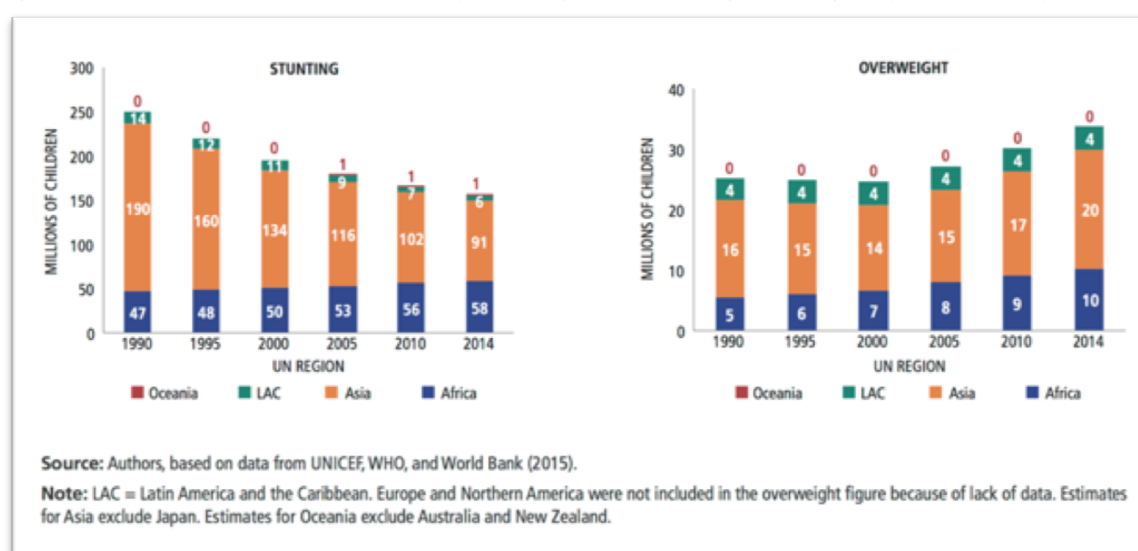
⁶ Malnutrition in children is determined by using anthropometric measurements, weight-for-height, weight-for-age, and height-for-age and is compared to the median population of children under five. Malnutrition in adults is determined by using the body mass index measurement, weight divided by height and is compared to the median population of adults (ibid).

⁷ Based on her research on Bangladesh and malnutrition: epidemic levels of malnutrition, despite strong economic growth in Bangladesh.

dynamics of a household. Further-to-that, domestic violence is a contributing factor to how food distributed (144). Nutrition deprivation is associated to other endowments such as education, income, and childbearing. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2005) research has found that low education and income are associated with malnutrition. Women and children experience higher rates of nutrition deprivation with malnourished mothers giving birth to low-weight-babies (ibid). Kabeer (1994) found in her research that female nutrition deprivation is related to the 'superimposition of early, frequent and closely spaced child-bearing on already high levels of malnutrition' (143). Therefore, it could be argued that cultural norms that enforce underage marriage (under eighteen) is a contributing factor to higher rates of female nutrition deprivation. Early marriage prevents young girls to continue their schooling as many of them are expected to engage in familial duties and/or bear children from the earliest onset (Jensen and Thornton, 2003). International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (2016) reported that underage mothers' (eighteen and younger) children are more likely to be stunted, and that stunting rates decrease when the mother has attained secondary education. The poverty-line approach assumes a relationship between nutrition deprivation and income deprivation to establish the poor from the non-poor. Income deprivation is an important component that must be factored into nutrition deprivation; however, income obstructs household gender dynamics by assuming earning an income equates to controlling an income. As previously mentioned Bessell (2010) argues that many poor women are unable to control their income, and income does not equate to equal share of income benefits. One of the main failings of the poverty-line approach is that it focuses on total calorie consumption rather than nutrition. However, Kabeer (1994) argues that the measurement of nutritional indicators is only as reliable as the assumption of the indicators. The accepted minimum calorie requirements that underline the poverty-line approach, assume that men and women require a fixed amount of calories per day to meet their basic nutritional needs. This is, however, based on 'unreliable estimates of women's activity levels', and only takes lactating mothers into consideration when adjusting women's nutritional needs. Therefore, rendering gender and nutrition deprivation invisible. IFPRI (2016) reported that the economic cost of malnutrition for Africa and Asia is eleven percent of GDP per annum. The number of stunting children in Africa has increased since the 1990s see figure 1 below; around forty-five percent of under-five deaths are associated with nutrition deprivation. The report further found that anaemic rates among women of reproductive age have but marginally decreased since 1995 (ibid). Uruguchi's (2010) research in Bangladesh and Ethiopia found a correlation between stunting and wasting of children and women's food consumption patterns, with higher rates of stunting and wasting

correlating with a less diverse diet. The correlation rates dramatically increase during times of food price hikes, whereby ‘households with the lowest dietary diversity had an average of thirty per cent (30%) of stunted and fifteen per cent (15%) of wasted children in Bangladesh, and 32 per cent (32%) of stunted and nineteen per cent (19%) of wasted children in Ethiopia’ (497). The study further found that children are withdrawn from school at higher rates during times of food price hikes. The Food and Agriculture Organisation’s (FAO, 2008) research indicates that women are more likely than men to spend their incomes on food and children’s needs – increasing a child’s survival rate by twenty percent (20%) when women can manage household expenditure.

Figure 1: Children under five affected by stunting and overweight by region (1990 – 2014)



source: (IFPRI, 2016:17)

Sen (1999) found in his research on Famines and Hunger that the frequencies of nutrition deprivation and famines are based on ‘economic and social interdependences’ and the ‘workings of the entire economy and society’ (162). Food relates to the ecological landscape, especially in environmentally hazardous communities. The ecological landscape would, therefore, have a direct impact on vulnerability to nutrition deprivation. Sen (1981;1987;1999) argued that food is not equally distributed in a society, it is not made freely available and must be earned. In 2007/2008 global food prices spiked and was referred to as the ‘silent tsunami’ (Sheeran, 2008 in Uruguchi, 2010). The globalised international food markets have had profound effect on food security, particularly on developing countries’ ability to produce and access food (Uruguchi, 2010). However, the consequences of the globalised food markets have a greater impact on ‘women, children, and landless and small-scale producers’ (491). The 2007/2008 rise in food prices was a

result of 'falling food stocks and droughts, trade speculation and devaluation of the US dollar, and increased use of grains for feedstock' (ibid). This was further compounded by the rise in oil prices and then exacerbated by the 2008 Wall Street financial crash which led to rising unemployment and falling wages reducing global economic growth in 2009 (Elson, 2010).

Sen (1999) argues that the entitlement to food is the ability to acquire ownership over food either through, personal production (peasant farmers), or, the ability to purchase it in the market. Entitlement is dependent on three variables: endowment; production possibilities; and exchange conditions. Endowment relates to the 'ownership over productive resources' including financial wealth that 'commands prices in the market' (163). The argument is that most people in the world have their labour as a productive resource which is influenced by their education and skills. Production possibilities relate to available technologies (physical capital) and the skills to utilise the technologies to produce food, such as in agriculture. For individuals who do not produce their own food, it is their ability to purchase food through their production possibilities from wage labour – employment. The exchange conditions are the ability to 'buy and sell goods', selling a product to be able to purchase another (ibid). Therefore, food entitlement is closely associated to other human capital needs, such as education and skills attainment, agency, and health. It is undeniable that nutrition deprivation is central to developing human capital and reducing poverty. Kent and MacRae (2010) found in their study in the Zambia women play a vital role in food security as both producers and providers. The responsibility for producing and feeding the household heavily rests on women in rural African societies (ibid). Further-to-that, their study found most marginalised farmers were women, and the entrenched gender inequalities decreased their ability to acquire other productive agricultural assets such as; access to land ownership (natural capital), technologies (physical capital), skills, and financial support (financial capital). Therefore, placing women in a precarious position to fulfil their household responsibilities from a 'potentially declining resource base' (388). Hillenbrand (2010) argues that women's limited agency negatively impacts food security at all levels in society: unequal food distribution within the household and low agricultural productivity reduces 'food availability on a national scale' (411). FAO (2008) reported that women and men occupy different roles with regards to food security in rural areas. Men engage (predominantly) in cash crop production whereas women are responsible for producing and processing staple crops and raising livestock for household consumption (ibid). From this the

following questions emerge from Sen's food entitlements, how do gender entitlements shape rural women's;

- a) the ownership over their labour (productive process)?
- b) access to productive assets (production possibilities)? and,
- c) the ability to buy and sell their goods (exchange conditions)?

Sen (1999) found that in times of famine staple foods are more valuable than higher yielding produce. This, therefore, can benefit women during times of economic and environmental shocks. To reduce women and children's vulnerability to food insecurity, gender inequalities over the command of resources need to be challenged to enhance food security in rural households (Uraguchi, 2010). Kabeer (1994) found that in times of food insecurity men abandoned their spouses and children. Food connects the household to the wider community; it represents more than the tangible aspects of nutrition. Food is a symbolic intangible asset and is inherently political, representing a household's social status within a community; diversity of a diet translates into social well-being (ibid). The political nature of food, therefore, provides insight into socio-cultural beliefs and values within the household and community. Batliwala and Dhanraj (2007) argue in their research that if a household receives any additional income (bonus), it is spent on 'tastier calories' rather than stocking up on staple calories. This raises the following questions, what are the coping strategies of women during times of food insecurity? And, how does food connect female-headed households to the wider community?

3.5.2 Gender and health deprivation

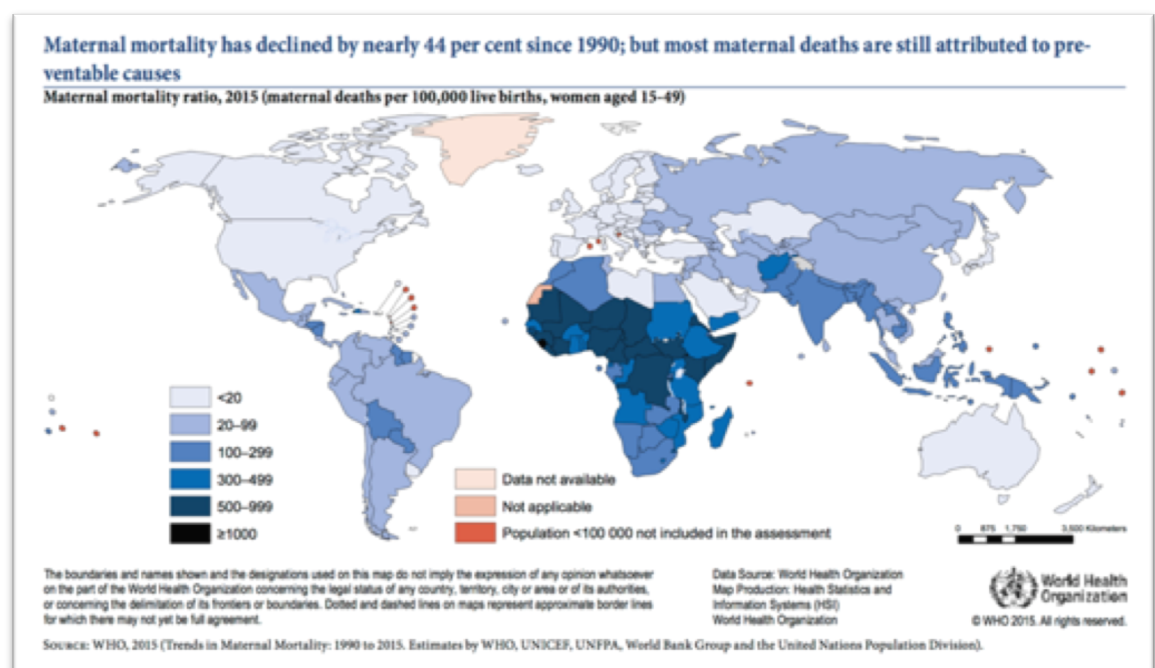
The above section has established that food security and intra-household food distribution embodies gender and interaction between different social institutions. Health is an important human capital endowment. There is an asymmetrical relationship between nutrition and health (Kabeer, 1994). Defining health is subjected to different definitions across disciplines. In 1946 the World Health Organisation (WHO)⁸ defined health as: 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or

⁸ Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2:100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.

infirmity' and to-date the definition remains unchanged (WHO, 2016). Health directly influences how the poor can economically survive. Poor people's bodies are their primary assets that they transfer into labour (Chambers, 1989, cited in Kabeer, 1994). Therefore, if women are more vulnerable to nutrition deprivation poor health would be axiomatic. Health is closely associated to other entitlements; housing structure, access to clean sanitation, safe drinking water, and, implications of overcrowding and disease epidemiology. Health is shaped through broader social factors such as 'economic, environmental and sociocultural influences' (Chant and McLlwaine, 2009:255). Women's health care needs are different to men's health care needs. Female mortality rates exceed those of males across most age groups, and maternal mortality rates are the highest amongst the poor (Kabeer, 1994). Sen (1995) argues that differentials in female to male mortality rates across various age groups is an indication of gender inequalities as cited in (Saith and Harris-White, 1999). And, morbidity and mortality differentials within particular age groups are a better indicator than an 'aggregate ratio' (ibid). This is due to female's having a biological advantage over males from 'foetal stage onwards' if they are given 'similar care' (Saith and Harris-White, 1999:467). Male infant mortality rates are higher due to female infants' naturally higher resilience to infectious diseases. The biological advantage females have over males continues into adolescence due to differential sex hormones that contribute to aggressive behaviour which place males at risk of dying from 'accidents and other violent causes' (Holden, 1987 in Saith & Harris-White, 1999). Further-to-that, females biological advantage continues until the menopause due to 'hormonal protection', however, following this the gap narrows (468). However, the differentials in female to male mortality rates dramatically shifts between reproductive ages fifteen to thirty-nine due to maternal mortality rates (ibid). 'Lack of care during pregnancy and delivery as well as a long history of neglect with undernourishment leading to stunting and poor physical growth all contribute to high maternal mortality rates' (20). There is evidence that supports a gender bias in access to health-care and nutrition in countries with high female infant and child mortality rates (Chen, *et al.*, 1981; Sen, 1999; Chant and McLlwaine, 2009). Boys are more likely to be hospitalised when they are ill in comparison with girls (Kabeer, 1994). Sen (1999) found that female to male mortality rates were higher across all ages. Further-to-that, girl's and women's disadvantage to nutrition and health care increases their maternal mortality risk. This is also related to social factors that place undue pressure on girls and women to have closely spaced births until they have a boy/s (Kabeer, 1994). Saith and Smith-Harris (1999) argue that the 'differences in health care, treatment and nutrition are considered the proximate determinants of discrimination while economic and cultural devaluation are considered the underlying causes' (467). A

study by Anderson and Ray (2010) on the excessive female mortality rates in relation to age and disease found that in Sub-Saharan Africa the majority of girls die from ‘preventable diseases, with malaria being the primary killer’, however, the majority of women die from human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome – with deaths in excess of six-hundred-thousand per year (1294). Anderson and Ray argue, considering their findings, that it is not possible to dismiss the WHO’s claims that gender inequality, violence against women, marital rape, and women’s limited agency over their bodies are the underlining reasons to why most female disease-related deaths are attributed to HIV/AIDS. Women and girls are also at greater risk to illness through social norms that expect them to care for the sick and dying (Saith and Harris-White, 1999).

Figure 2: Maternal mortality map



source: World Health Organisation (2015) cited in (United Nations, 2015:5)

3.5.3 Social well-being

The WHO’s definition of health goes beyond physical health to include psychological and social well-being. However, well-being is attributed to life satisfaction and happiness, Moore (2010) argues that most analysis of well-being has not received as much attention as other aspects of poverty. Chant and Craske (2003) argue that psychological and emotional well-being are not given similar precedence as physical health. Life satisfaction and well-being are

subjective and difficult to universally measure. In a study conducted by Patel *et al.*, (1999) across five different low to middle income countries found that gender, low income and education contributed to high levels of common mental disorders (CMD)⁹. A detailed analysis of the various CMD goes beyond the scope of this research, however, the findings of the study provide insights into the social processes associated with CMDs linking gender and poverty to poor psychological health:

‘...women’s mental health cannot be considered in isolation from social, political and economic issues. When women’s position in society is examined, it is clear that there are sufficient causes in current social arrangements to account for the surfeit of depression and anxiety experienced by women’ (1466).

Nutrition deprivation and poor access to health-care increases women’s risk to poor mental health (ibid). The construction of women’s social roles as mothers, reproductive workers, carers for the sick and their increasing economic burdens, make women more vulnerable to CMDs. Further, women are vulnerable to CMDs if they are unable to fulfil their reproductive responsibilities as a result of infertility or inability to have male children (ibid). As mentioned above, the social pressure on women to have male children is dangerous to their physical health through closely spaced births. Women are stigmatised more than men when they have poor mental health (ibid). Violence against women majorly contributes to high levels of female morbidity and mortality across all cultures, having serious ‘psychological and emotional consequences – depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociation disorders, somatization, sexual dysfunction and self-harm behaviour’ (Fischbach and Herbet, 1997 in Patel, *et al.*, 1999:1466). Violence against women is a ‘manifestation of the power imbalance’ that gender embodies, Chinkin (1995) argues that it is ‘not random, accidental or a private matter; but structural’ (24). Chinkin further argues that the UN’s Human Rights Convention 1966 has not interpreted gender-based violent acts such as; domestic violence, rape, abortion of female foetuses, female infanticide, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced sterilisation, and forced childbirth. The WHO regards ‘violence against women¹⁰ as a significant public health problem, as well as a fundamental violation of women’s human

⁹ ‘CMD are depressive and anxiety disorders that are classified in ICD-10 as neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders and mood disorders’ (Patel, *et al.*, 1999).

¹⁰ The term violence against women encompasses many forms of violence, including violence by an intimate partner (intimate partner violence) and rape/sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by someone other than a partner (non-partner sexual violence), as well as female genital mutilation, honour killings and the trafficking of women (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005: 10-11).

rights' (WHO, 2013:2). Feminist scholarship (True 2012; Dobash and Dobash 1979) argues that:

'...violence against women as a product of unequal power relations between men and women, manifested in asymmetries in the gender division of productive and reproductive labour, paid and unpaid work, material resources, social recognition and the distribution of authority and decision-making power' cited in (Kabeer, 2014:13).

Research has found that violence against women tends to be more prevalent in societies with socio-cultural norms with inflexible gender roles and relations, masculine social ideals with aggression and violence, patriarchal social structures, limited decision making of women, restricted divorce laws and controls over women's sexuality reproduction (Kabeer, 2014). As mentioned above, Chant (2016) argues the intangible benefit of raising the number of female-headed households to allow women to escape violent marriages. Women's personal security is threatened through domestic violence and sexual harassment in public places, and poor women are particularly vulnerable because of their limited capacity to exit violent situations (Kabeer, 1994). Gender embodies social mobility boundaries especially in communities where it is inappropriate for women to interact in public spaces. This can lead to harassing and/or assaulting behaviour from men who believe women are transgressing gender social norms (ibid). Kabeer argues that poor women are especially vulnerable to harassing behaviour from strangers because of restricted income to use appropriate private transport, or that they must engage in work outside of the household. Further-to-that, 'in a society where family honour is linked to the virtue of its female members, sexual harassment and rape are often used in property feuds and factional disputes to humiliate opponents' (149). Domestic violence is, however, poorly documented and Kabeer argues that it requires more attention within the poverty discourse. Therefore, how does the ecological landscape shape the vulnerability of women to violence?

The WHO (2013) study looked at population-based cross-sectional data sets from WHO regions from low, middle, and high-income countries, and found that exposure to violence had adverse physiological and psychological health outcomes¹¹ on 'levels of women's

¹¹ 'Through complex and interconnected neural, neuroendocrine and immune responses to acute and chronic stress. When exposed to prolonged or acute stress, areas of the brain such as the hippocampus, amygdala and prefrontal cortex undergo structural changes that have implications for mental health and cognitive functioning and can lead to mental disorders, somatoform disorders or chronic illness, as well as other physical conditions. In

morbidity and mortality' (7). The study found that domestic violence increases women's vulnerability to HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) through forced sexual intercourse, and women's limited ability to negotiate condom use (ibid). Further, the study found that:

'...behavioural evidence that men who use violent behaviour against their female partners are more likely to engage in HIV-risk behaviours – including having multiple partners, frequent alcohol use, visiting sex-workers and having an STI' (22).

Induced abortions are also a consequence of domestic violence whereby women may be unable to negotiate contraceptive use out of fear from their spouses. Low-weight and premature births are also associated with domestic violence, as a result of chronic stress. Furthermore, the study found that women may turn to alcohol abuse as a coping method, and thirty-eight percent (38%) of female homicides globally were committed by intimate partners (ibid). However, the study's findings are based on available country-data, and in many regions particularly in East-Asia, Central Sub-Saharan Africa, Caribbean and Central Asia the data is limited, and the findings for these regions are reliant on specific violence against women surveys¹².

The reporting of domestic violence is complex and compounded by social norms. Many women may not report domestic violence because of 'gendered stereotypes', the notion of a 'good-wife entails obedience and submission' (Chant and Craske, 2003:119). Furthermore, women may be pressurised by family members and other women in the community to not report incidences (ibid). However, in many cultures violence against women is sanctioned as acceptable behaviour, and 'even by law, because it is considered a private matter' (ibid). This, connects domestic violence against women to other social institutions, making it a social phenomenon that re-enforces gender power relations. Violence against women

response to stress, the immune system can be compromised, exacerbating the spread of cancer and viral infections. Sustained and acute elevated stress levels have also been linked to cardiovascular disease, hypertension, gastrointestinal disorders, chronic pain, and the development of insulin-dependent diabetes. Stress during and around the time of pregnancy has been linked with low- birth-weight infants, as rising cortisol levels lead to constriction of the blood vessels, limiting blood flow to the uterus. Furthermore, the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal response can trigger premature labour and premature birth, through contractions of the smooth muscle tissue in the uterus' (World Health Organisation, 2013:7).

¹² WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses (World Health Organisation, 2005).

includes harmful traditional practices. In November 2014 two UN human rights committees; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) put forward obligations to governments to end harmful traditional practices (CEDAW, 2014). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24(3))¹³, and CEDAW (Articles 2, 5 and 16)¹⁴ and regional instruments refer to harmful traditional practices. The definition of harmful traditional practices constitutes violence against women and girls, and can include:

‘acid violence, breast flattening, cosmetic mutilation, dowry and bride price, early/forced marriage and marriage by abduction/rape, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), ‘honour crimes’, corrective rape, and female infanticide, ritual sexual slavery, virginity testing, practices related to initiation or menstruation, some widowhood rituals and accusations of witchcraft levied at older women’ (Kouyaté, 2009:4-5).

CEDAW further identifies the social processes that legitimise harmful practices, condemning social or religious customs and values that violate women and girl’s human rights¹⁵ (United Nations, 2014). Therefore, harmful traditional practices are culturally or religiously-sanctioned practices, rituals or social norms that inflict physical and psychological harm on others to ensure social conformity that violate their individual human rights. However, a detailed analysis of all forms of harmful traditional practices goes beyond the scope of this research. Although, a question emerges from the above, to what extent are harmful practices reproduced in female-headed households?

3.6 Gender and labour entitlements

Following on from the above section, labour entitlements and endowments are closely associated with investments into human capital. The section below discusses the gender division of productive and reproductive labour. Labour-based entitlements and gender

¹³ See <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

¹⁴ See <http://www.hrcr.org/docs/CEDAW/cedaw3.html>

¹⁵ ‘Harmful practices are frequently justified by invoking social or religious customs and values often embedded in patriarchal cultures and traditions. They are deeply rooted in attitudes that regard women and girls as inferior to men and boys. They are also often used as a means of ‘protecting’ the honour of women, children and their families and as a way of controlling women’s choices and expressions, in particular, their sexuality’ (quote from the United Nations website, 2014).

inequalities relate to the ability of women to choose how they want to work. The division of labour obscures women's perception of the 'value of their labour' (Heintz, 2010:435). Men can engage in various types of labour that is not available to women (Kabeer, 1994). Women are bound and constrained by their familiar obligations that limit and sometimes prohibit their entry into remunerated work. However, many women navigate around cultural limitations by engaging in low paid work that is an extension of their domestic duties transforming their unpaid labour into a resource such as small-scale agricultural work (ibid). Following on from above sections, the gender division of labour intersects with space and how space is ordered. The household is perceived to be private-feminine-space, outside the household is perceived to be public-masculine-space. This creates a binary view of space, whereby men occupy one space and women another. Chant (2007) argues that productive work is 'represented as a masculine space par excellence because it is where men accumulates the social, symbolic and productive capitals that are their contributions to the family' (165). Reproductive labour is seen as a 'natural' endowment to women, embedded in their familial and communal duties (Kabeer, 2003). Chant (2007) found in her research that women believed men only wanted wives who were prepared to be their domestic servants. Their spouses prohibited their sons from engaging in reproductive work believing this would effeminate them. Further-to-that, when the mothers are not able to perform their familial duties, this responsibility is transferred to their daughters. Thus, reproductive work impacts the capabilities of daughters attending and staying in school. It is not uncommon for daughters to be sent to work in an extended family members household when they have restrictions on their domestic labour. Intra-household 'gender dynamics and division of labour' obscures women's perception of the 'value of their labour' (435). Kabeer (2003) argues that the type of work that women and men do is a more 'powerful indicator of poverty than the fact that they work' (136).

Rakodi (1999) argues that human capital endowments are essential for a household to successfully fulfil its reproductive and productive needs. The burdens of women's reproductive work are increased when the household's physical capital attributes such as water and utilities are absent. Therefore, how does the ecological landscape shape the reproductive labour burdens of women? The division of reproductive and productive labour in 'poor countries' is entrenched in the family/kinship and community institutions (Kabeer, 2003). Therefore, how does the gender division of labour shape the economic participation of women? However, Western terminology of labour refers to remunerated employment that is captured in national statistics in the formal economy (Kabeer, 2003; Chant and

McIlwaine, 2009). The narrow notion of labour not only excludes work carried out in the informal and subsistence economies in developing countries, it assumes that reproductive labour performed by women in the household is not work (Chant and McIlwaine, 2009). However, reproductive and unpaid community work has been typically excluded from macroeconomic analysis as it is not accounted for in the national statistics (Kabeer, 2003). Heintz (2010) argues that poverty reduction measures focus only on economic growth and employment that occurs in the market economy, thereby discounting the value of reproductive work. Living standards are impacted by wage labour, and although, it has been established that the poor's primary asset is their labour, many women do not have control over the use of their labour (ibid). Machines have placed many women out of agricultural work, which has led to increased competition over available work. Many women receive food as payment for their labour or wages below a liveable standard (Kabeer, 1994). The industries, which many women occupy outside the household, are linked to the low paid industries, which governments have invested in, for example, the garment industry in the Asia and the food industry in Africa. Trade liberalisation in some developing countries has increased women's access to employment, however, this is a short-term gain, as women are in volatile low-paid manufacturing jobs (Seguino and Grown, 2006). Women are overrepresented in export processing zones (EPZs), Seguino (2000) argues that women's suppressed wages have contributed to 'increasing competitiveness of export-oriented industries and therefore to economic growth¹⁶' as cited (in Razavi, 2016:24). Further-to-that, some of the labour needed to support EPZs is outsourced to 'locally owned factories or informal workshops', therefore making women's contribution to the formal economy and international supply chains invisible (Pearson, 2010:423).

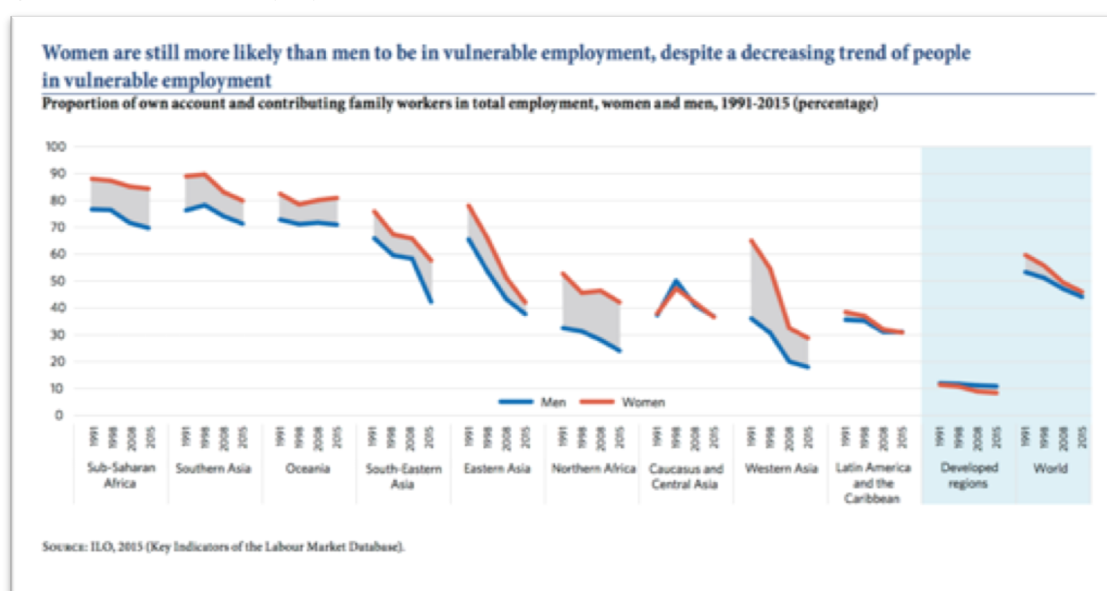
The exploitation of women's cheap labour has compounding effects, as many young women will drop out of school to take-up short-term employment opportunities, which has long-term negative impacts on their livelihoods. As many men are not willing to work for suppressed wages, women are the majority of those who occupy these sectors (George, 2007). Behind the formal economy is the less visible informal economy where goods and services are traded, except 'undocumented' by official statistics. Below the informal

¹⁶ 'Even in 'successful' cases where exports have been the engines of growth and employment generation, as was the case in East Asia in the 1970s and 1980s, the competitiveness of exports has been predicated on gender inequality, as women's low wages render them the workforce of choice in production processes geared to export markets' (Seguino, 2000 in Razavi, 2016:24).

economy is the invisible subsistence economy, where goods and services are ‘produced for personal consumption’. The foundation that supports all economic activities is the unpaid ‘reproductive and care economy’. However, the size of these interconnected economies varies across countries, although, in Africa, the formal economy is the smallest, Kabeer (2003) refers to it as the ‘tip of the iceberg’ (28-29). Women are overrepresented in all sectors of the invisible economies. How does the ecological landscape shape the informal and invisible economies in ecologically fragile environments? Therefore, to make economic policies less gender blind requires an analysis of how and where women and men utilise their labour. However, from a market liberal interpretation (USAID), women’s access to the informal economy is the pathway to ‘social empowerment’ and contributes to the alleviation of household poverty. The flexibility within the informal sector is seen to be the ‘solution’ to women’s ‘double burdens’ of reproductive and productive obligations, allowing them to work around their domestic responsibilities (Meagher, 2010:473). Further, by removing discriminatory barriers (legal and cultural obstacles) to entry will ‘unleash the empowering effects of the informal economy’ (ibid). However, this argument ignores the gender complexities of empowerment and the division of labour. Meagher (2010) summarises it eloquently:

‘...their rather tautological assumption that women’s empowerment in the informal economy only requires stripping away obstacles to fuller participation glosses over mounting evidence that women’s increased informal participation is concentrating them in ‘survival’ rather than in ‘growth’ activities’ (473).

Figure 3: Women unemployment



source: International Labour Organisation (2015) cited in (United Nations, 2015:1)

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter set-out to deepen the theoretical framework by close examination of the socio-cultural practices of the household and community. It was established that the household is an essential capital asset and the primary unit of social reproduction. The chapter explored the plethora of microsocial arrangements at the intersection of the household; the institution of marriage, gender and household headship, and the community. Following that, the chapter closely examined how gendered entitlements and obligations shape women's human capital endowments with a focus on nutrition, health and labour. Through the above examination, various questions emerged to which this research aims to address, below is a summary of the key questions. How does the institution of marriage ascribe gendered entitlements and obligations with respect to the household and community? To what extent do gendered entitlements and obligations shape first and second-generation asset accumulation (and erosion), and the rights of women on the dissolution of the marriage contract? To what extent are gendered socio-cultural customs reproduced in female-headed households? Do female-headed households in rural areas experience a sense of increased agency, and how does this influence their relationship with the wider community? How do social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities shape the livelihood strategies of female-headed households in the community? The above questions in this chapter and in the previous chapter are addressed in the research findings chapters five, six and seven. The following chapter four discusses this research's methodology with Koraro a small village in northern Ethiopia being the selected case-study to address the above questions.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodological approach used in this research to address the research aim and objectives. Ethiopia was selected as the country of study, with particular focus on a small rural village Koraro located in the northern province of Tigray. Koraro is an ecologically fragile village at risk to environmental hazards; droughts, flooding and famine.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the feminist epistemological position of this research. Following on from epistemology, the chapter will explore in detail the methodological approach and design of this research, a case study using ethnographic techniques, involving qualitative multi-methods of data collection. Consistent with the qualitative approach, this section explores the data collection methods used over a period of several months, detailing how the fieldwork was carried out in-country. The chapter concludes with addressing the research quality, rigour and ethics of the research methods carried out.

4.1 Epistemological approach

Feminist scholarship questions the production of knowledge and how gender influences the conceptualisation of knowledge (Anderson, 1995, Doucet and Mauthner, 2007). Many feminists argue that there is no objectivity in research and that researchers always influence their work, and the interpretation of the data is gender-biased (Kralik and van Loon, 2008). The debate particularly criticises the ‘push towards the quantification of knowledge’ rather than the ‘contextualisation of knowledge that signals scientific precision’ (Taylor, 1998: 358). This research is located within a feminist epistemology, that is, the multi-method qualitative approach was guided by two key principles underpinning feminist inquiry. Firstly, it sets out to study and make visible the lived experiences and social realities of women who are vulnerable to poverty in an ecologically fragile community – Koraro. Harding (1986) states ‘when we begin inquiries with women’s experiences instead of men’s, we quickly encounter phenomena (such as emotional labour or relational personal structures) that are made invisible by the concepts and categories of these theories’ (338). For example, women have a closer relationship with the natural environment through their reproductive roles and

higher dependency on natural resources, this privileges their knowledge of the vulnerability of the area to various external shocks; environmental, economic and social. Further, having less access to essential household resources, women manage their livelihoods from a position of insecurity requiring them to quickly adapt to the changing environment. Further, female-headed households are a marginalised group of the women in the community subjected to exclusion and exploitation from the male community leaders. Secondly, by being responsive to participants and systematically reflexive throughout the research journey, this study enabled me, as a feminist researcher to link what Reinharz (1992) refers to as the 'past and present of data gathering and action' and to examine my positionality within the research process as a knowledge-creator as cited in (Gatenby and Humphries, 2000:90). The research highlights and challenges the social processes and structures of Ethiopian society impacting women's everyday lives.

4.2 Research approach

The methodological approach used in this research was a case study using critical ethnographic techniques (Parker-Jenkins, 2018), involving qualitative multi-methods of gathering data. Consistent with a feminist epistemology (Doucet and Mauthner, 2007) it is necessary to understand the broader socio-cultural structure, norms, beliefs and values to locate the role of women within a rural environment. Feminist research addresses the broader issues within society analysing issues of power and reflexivity (ibid). This holistic approach to research is a shared principle with ethnographic research, cultures and communities are a collective or shared 'hole' and individuals can only be understood in their relation to that 'hole' as argued by Johnson and Johnson (1990: 167, cited in Stewart, 1998: 6). However, feminist research is critical, therefore, the study adopted a critical view of socio-cultural practices, recognising that cultural life is in a 'constant state of tension between control and resistance' (Thomas, 1993:9). The tensions are revealed in social norms, behaviour, rituals, explicit rules, and symbolic cultural artefacts that constitute a given society (ibid). These tensions were observed in the manner in which the participants would describe the implication of particular social norms on the well-being of women and their vulnerability to poverty such as (and not limited to); the impacts of underage marriage and the practice of patrilocal customs. The close examination of the vulnerability of women to poverty in situ are the critical ethnographic principles of this research. The research drew

on these principles studying every-day events in order to unpack the broader social processes of power relations and the 'symbolic mechanisms that impose one set of preferred meanings or behaviour over others' (Thomas, 1993:9). I observed and photographed (where permissible) the daily household and community activities of women. This included observation of agricultural and non-agricultural work; rural and urban market trading; community ceremonies and celebrations; and religious rituals and festivals. Although, in principle, this technique was ethnographic the level of participation was not typical of an ethnographic study due to limited participant observations. A typical ethnography requires the researcher to locate themselves within the field of study through active participant observation over an extended period of time (Stewart, 1998). Although this research did not undertake an ethnographic study, the principles that constrain the ethnographic approach were still non-the-less applicable to this research, this is addressed in the following section. The close observation of daily-life assisted this research to locate women and in particular female-headed households within Ethiopia's broader social processes.

Female-headed households were the primary units of analysis in relation to the ecological landscape of Koraro, empirical data was collected through multiple qualitative methods; various in-depth interview techniques and observational data. However, participants from male-headed households were also included in the study. Methodologically this research is identified as a singular case study because it is not comparing empirical data found in Ethiopia with empirical data from another country. Furthermore, the material and social parameters of Ethiopia contextualise the research findings to regional variables which are then localised to a particular ecological landscape. However, the empirical findings of the Ethiopian case comprise of data collected from multiple individual units of analysis. The research compared the data collected between the smaller individual case studies to gain insight into the collective livelihood strategies of female-headed households in situ. This is consistent with the case study approach, whereby a case study is an analysis of a singular/small number of unit/s (person, community, organisation) in relation to their environment in 'real' time, embracing various methods of enquiry, qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Conceptually the case-study approach provides 'descriptions and analyses of either a single case or small number of cases' (Smith, 2006:56). The approach traditionally uses the comparative method of enquiry of two or three targeted cases permitting 'to isolate the cause and consequences of particular case features and dynamics' (ibid). The approach permits research to analyse the 'social processes,

interactions, and meaning systems' of a singular/small number of cases, whereby the data collected is rich and detailed (ibid). All sociological methods of enquiry are axiomatically comparative, comparing differentials over time. Although, Max Weber claimed that the comparative method explores the 'trajectories of social institutions in their irreducible differences and singularities' rather than 'drawing parallels and analogies' between them. This research focussed on the analogies between microsocial institutions, examining how household gendered entitlements and obligations are reproduced in the community, and how it shapes the vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty. This was observed in (and not limited to) how the gender division of labour in the household is socially reproduced in what this research refers to as the gender division of trade in the community in chapter seven. The following section will discuss how this research carried out this case-study.

4.3 Research design and qualitative multi-method approach

The choice of location for this research, its planning, and subsequent execution, took several months, as it involved securing Ethiopian government permission, support from the University of Addis Ababa, and the preparation of local logistical arrangements. This research was carried out between January 2015 – March 2016 using multi-qualitative methods of enquiry, in-depth semi-structured interviews, observational data was collected across four regions Tigray, Afar, Amhara and Oromia, and photographs taken (with permission), and an in-depth documentary analysis. The in-country empirical data was gathered over two field-trips, separated by several months. This separation of fieldwork allowed for a period of critical reflection on both the theoretical framework and the collected data. During the time of reflection, some conceptual weaknesses were identified and addressed in preparation for the second field-trip. Following the final field-trip, the documentary analysis was carried out.

The section below will lay-out the multi-methods used in the data collection process. However, for the sake of readability and to avoid repetition, the section will first discuss the methods of enquiry that were carried out during both field trips and then it will address the experiences in the field in both trips. First, the section will briefly discuss the documentary analysis, then it will review the ethnographic observation and photographic data. Following that the section will explore the interview process and the role of the research assistant, and then it will address the different types of semi-structured interviews which I have divided

into four sub-categories: formal semi-structured; guided semi-structured; group semi-structured; and, thematic semi-structured interviews. In each of these sections, I address how these interviews informed the research process and some insights on the data collection process. The section will then address each stage of the research process; the first field-trip, the separation time and the second trip. Further, it was during the second field trip that the focus of this research was explicitly on Koraro it is here the chapter will provide descriptive information on Koraro and the recruitment of the participants.

4.3.1 Documentary analysis

The documentary analysis was done when I returned to London post the second field trip. This method of enquiry helped me create a new picture and ecology of Koraro by examining other academic research, institutional reports from international development actors; and government surveys and research on the region. These documents focused on environmental and economic shocks; humanitarian aid; Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme; socio-economic studies carried out on women and female-headed households; agricultural surveys and land utilisation reports; and, individual studies on surrounding villages. This process informed my understanding of the wider-structural aspects of Koraro providing a holistic view of the region and the fragility of the communities in this part of the country. Further, this process also enabled me to gain a measure of the validity and reliability on some of the findings by triangulating my in-country findings with the documentary analysis. The only limitation to these data sets is that some are regionally based. The closest statistical data sets available for Koraro is embedded in provincial and regional data sets; the Tigray Province, the Eastern Tigray zone, and Hawzen the local municipal region (woreda) where Koraro is located.

4.3.2 Ethnographic observation

The ethnographic observations occurred in different stages in both field trips and their focus varied. I spent some time observing market interaction in different trading markets in different regions. This was non-participatory; my research assistants and I would observe how people engaged in these spaces from a slight distance to avoid creating a disturbance.

Although, our very presence was disruptive for some people particularly in urban markets. Further, observational studies were focussed on observing girls and women performing their reproductive work: collecting water and fuelwood; preparing food and coffee. During both trips, I travelled through Ethiopia's countryside with a guide and one research assistant. The extent of my travels took me through the regions of Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Afar to collect observational data of Ethiopia's agrarian communities. The aim of this process was to look for commonalities between different agricultural areas and to gather historical and cultural data. The layout of the agricultural areas is vast so at times it was only possible to collect photographic data on the environment and farming activities. However, because I was there during the rainy season and the post-harvest season, I was able to capture imagery on the changing environment and impacts of the drought on the landscape. I focussed my attention on photographing various natural resources for example water sources and their utilisation; washing clothes and collecting water. Further, I focussed on photographing farming activities during both seasons to visually capture the gender division of labour in agriculture production. In Koraro I took a lot of photographs of the village itself to capture the dependency households have on natural capital. Collecting photographic data needed to be executed with care and consideration of the people and the social situations I was observing. Photographs were taken with a Canon 1000D and iPhone 5C camera, the Geotagging feature in the iPhone 5C helped to pin various locations into Google Earth. I used a journal to transcribe the events I observed, participant details and reflections on various data.

4.3.3 Formal semi-structured interviews

The formal semi-structured interviews were carefully designed on the scholarship in which this research is grounded in. Adopting a feminist approach to interviewing, the interviews were modelled around forming social relationships with the participants. Interviewing is a process of exchanging personal information between two parties building a relationship that is under constant renegotiation (Warren and Hackney, 2000). However, the interview process can be influenced by various cultural dimensions that influence the status of women, married woman may be reluctant to divulge personal information to an unmarried woman. Gender predetermines access into a community, and access to the social group in the community which is to be studied. Further-to-that, ethnicity and language can create

cultural boundaries (ibid). I was very aware of the potential cultural limitations I as a European physically embodied as an interviewer. Furthermore, this intersected with the need for research assistants who were academically capable and who could translate. This introduced another power dynamic into the interview process for which the research had to acknowledge and address to limit the impacts on the data collection process.

4.3.4 Role of the research assistant

The language barrier removed my agency to personally negotiate the boundaries of the social relationship of the interviewer and the interviewee, thereby making the relationship between the research assistant and myself important during the interview process. This created a relationship of power between the research and the research assistant that was under constant renegotiation. Furthermore, the sex, age and social class of the research assistants introduced an additional power dynamic into the research process with the participants. To address the obvious problems, the research assistants¹⁷ were provided with ongoing research training. However, the most effective technique was to fully incorporate the research assistants into the study and getting them to actively engage with feminist ethnographic research principles. These principles focus on the process of reflexivity at the various overlapping ethnographic stages of 'entrée, process, and analysis' (Warren and Hackney, 2000:3). Gender frames the ethnographic stages of enquiry, influencing reflexivity on both female and male researchers. Therefore, how data is collected and analysed is ontologically gender and culturally-bias. At the beginning and end of each day, the research team would spend between thirty to sixty minutes to discuss and reflect on the findings, the strategy for the day ahead or for the following day. The research assistants were encouraged to disclose their opinions and thoughts to strengthen the relationship between us. This is consistent with feminist epistemology which 'analytically' interrogates emotion as an aspect of the research process of 'researcher-researched relationship' (Stanley and Wise, 1993:189). This can, therefore, be observed in the researcher-research assistant relationship as it is an integral aspect of the research process. To address my agency in the field I invested more time into establishing relationships with the participants, some participants

¹⁷ It is important to mention that all the research assistants held a MA degree, two in social anthropology and one in geography.

were engaged multiple times during each expedition. Maintaining this level of engagement was important with participants who were comfortable to discuss particular sensitive subjects, female genital mutilation/cutting and gender-based violence. This, therefore, made for the participation in social rituals such as the coffee ceremony an integral part of the interview process.

4.3.5 Guided semi-structured interviews

Guided semi-structured interviews were not as structured as formal semi-structured interviews but not completely void of structure as un-structured interviews. These interviews concentrated on a specific topic and with a particular participant, they were ongoing and were able to take place without research assistants. Therefore, the style of the interview process was conversational, and essential data points were collected incrementally. Two of the female participants who were continuously engaged in guided interviews were members of my host family during the first field trip. The guided interviews allowed me to personally reflect on certain observations conversationally with the participants. These interviews provided for deeper insight into the heterogeneity of women in Ethiopia, while highlighting the homogenous socio-cultural practices that shape gendered household and community entitlements and obligations. These were the observation on the gender division of labour which transcended the rural-urban boundaries.

4.3.6 Group semi-structured interviews

Group semi-structured interviews were carried out with three or more people who were from the same sub-group within the community. Group interviews here share similar characteristics to focus groups but cannot be characterised as focus group interviews. The interviews lacked the necessary structure of a focus group which is to solicit particular information that would not necessarily be accessible without the group (Agar and MacDonald, 1995). The group interviews were informally formed among a sub-group of interest within the community, although they were in-depth, they were closer to being conversational instead of structured. The topics of interest discussed in these interviews were culturally specific such as (and not limited to); *idir* and *equb* informal membership

based financial-cooperatives. These interviews were carried out in Addis Ababa, Hawzen and Koraro. The research assistant was present to translate for some of the participants.

4.3.7 Thematic semi-structured interviews

Thematic semi-structured interviews were interviews that were carried out alongside the collection of observational data. These interviews were arranged with particular participants to investigate specific socio-cultural customs and historical data, these interviews were conducted with historians, local guides and priests. The research assistant was present during these interviews. The aim of these interviews was to acquire rich data to address where possible the (time) limitations of the participant observations discussed in the above section. However, the thematic interviews revealed significant socio-cultural practices which in themselves constitute as empirical data. All of the above participants were men.

Therefore, all the data collected on local and regional cultural practices and history was from the perspective of men. The over-representation of men in these positions reflect the wider social norms that locate men in positions of authority that control how public space is ordered, this includes how knowledge about a particular space (local or regional) is accessed, acquired and processed. This is a part of the overarching patriarchal structure of Ethiopia. It was during these interviews that my agency was further compromised because of my gender. This, therefore, increased the importance of the relationship between the research assistants and me during the research process. Further, this permitted us to experience the ascribed entitlements of men over public spaces, this is explored in the following section.

Table 1: First trip urban and rural interviews

1	Individual interviews	Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widow	Head	Total
1.1	Semi-structured Addis Ababa (urban)							
	Female	2	1	2	0	0	0	5
	Male	5	1	0	0	0	1	6
	Multiple Rural areas							
	Female	1	0	3	0	1	3	5
	Male	1	1	0	0	0	1	2

1.2	Guided-interview							
	Addis Ababa (urban)							
	Female	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
	Male	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
	Total	13	5	6	0	1	5	25

2	Group interviews	Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widow	Head	Total
	Female (A1)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Male (A1)	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Male (A2)	3	0	0	0	0	0	3

3	Thematic interviews	Location	Interviewee	Age
3.1	Churches and Monasteries			
	Lalibela monastery	Amhara (rural)	Historian guide	27
	Blue Nile monastery	Amhara (rural)	Resident priest	58
3.2	Regional cultural			
	Multiple locations Amhara & Oromia	Amhara & Oromia	Local guide	35

Table 2: Second trip Koraro and surrounding areas interviews

1	Individual interviews	Single	Married	Divorce	Separate	Widow	Head	Total
1.1	Semi-structured							
	Koraro (rural)							
	Female	3	9	18	1	5	27	36
	Male	0	3	0	0	0	3	3
	Hawzen woreda (urban)							
	Female	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Male	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
1.2	Guided-interviews							
	Hawzen woreda (rural)							
	Male	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Hawzen woreda (urban)							
	Male	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	3	15	18	1	6	33	43

2	Group interviews	Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widow	Head	Total
	Female (K1)	0	1	1	0	1	2	3
	Female (K2)	0	0	2	0	1	3	3
	Male (HW1)	0	4	0	0	0	4	4

3	Thematic interviews	Location	Interviewee	Age
3.1	Churches and Monasteries			
	Abuna Yemata Guh church Maryam & Daniel Korkor	Hawzen woreda	Historian guide	27
	Abune Gebre Michael I Monastery	Koraro Kebele	Priest	66
	Abreha We Atsbeha Church	Hawzen woreda	Priest	63
3.2	Regional cultural			
	Multiple locations Tigray & Afar	Tigray & Afar (rural)	Local guide	35
	Multiple locations Tigray & Afar	Tigray & Afar (rural)	Local guide/driver	33

4.4 First field-trip: June – August 2015

In June 2015 a preliminary study was carried out over several weeks, it began in Addis Ababa and extended to neighbouring rural villages in Oromia thirty-six kilometres (36km) away, then it followed onto various agrarian areas in Amhara four-hundred and ninety-five kilometres (495km) north of the capital. The data collected across these areas provided insights on the questions and the opportunity to reflect on the interview process, and the quality of the data being collected. It is important to note two critical external factors at the time of this field trip. Firstly, Addis Ababa was host to the United Nations 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development¹⁸. This restricted movement around particular parts of the city. The presence of the military throughout the city intensified the atmosphere in the streets, which made people quite hostile at times. However, the military presence did not prevent three young street children from trying to mug me several metres away from an officer. Secondly, during this time it was the Ethiopian rainy season, this contributed to restricting mobility in and around Addis Ababa and rural areas. During the first two weeks of this field trip, much time was allocated to institutional arrangements with the University of Addis Ababa and regional government and initial research training of research assistants. The research assistants were recruited from the Anthropology department at the University

¹⁸ <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/index.html>

of Addis Ababa. Over the course of this entire field trip I was undertaking a pre-feasibility assessment to assess the logistical requirements to carry out the study in Koraro Tigray. This required finding and securing a point of contact in Addis Ababa who had the capabilities to could assist with the known demands of the study and establishing contact with the appropriate officials.

One of the research assistants was from the surrounding rural village and helped to secure access to the participants in the rural areas. His mother was instrumental in aiding with the process, she recommended a few potential participants who would be willing to take part. However, not all the people she suggested were engaged but, once we engaged with the first two participants recruitment of the other participants snowballed. The second research assistant secured access to several participants in Addis Ababa see table 1 above. The remaining un-secured participants were recruited off the streets, these participants were migrants from the Tigray region who were engaged in selling products on the side of the street and begging. However, it was during these interviews with the female participants that the interview process was interrupted by random men off the street. As a precautionary measure the research team took the participants to an area where I was temporarily residing (a quiet residential street), and within the first ten minutes of the interview(s) random men would just arrive and place themselves directly opposite the team to listen. When the team would get up to move away, the men would simply follow us. Within twenty minutes the team would be surrounded by five to seven different men. The men would ask why the team was speaking with the participant(s), to which the research assistants would provide a response that was deemed to be non-threatening i.e. 'we want to find out about the difficulties of people who beg or sell small items on the street'. This behaviour of random men unconnected to the participant(s) provided for the opportunity to observe the entitlements of men over public space and how women are supposed to engage with that space. They were also curious about what the participant(s) would say and why the team was interested in the participant(s). This had an impact on how the participant(s) engaged with the interview process, the closer the men got the shorter and less detailed their answers became. Their clustering around the research team was to assert their dominance over that space and how it was utilised. The team found this behaviour of the men to be very intimidating to which the interviews were abruptly ended. These experiences allowed the team the opportunity to interrogate two emotional aspects of the interview process; firstly, the team felt discomfort and sense of anger on behalf of the participant(s), it was a small window into the restriction of the participants' mobility in public. Secondly, there were

feelings of anger towards these men because the team felt threatened and through that the team's agency was removed. However, the behaviour of the men became a data point to which I incorporated into the research process. Following these restrictions to engage with women in streets of Addis Ababa, the team moved into the surrounding rural areas to carry out the interviews. At this stage of the data collection process, the primary focus of the empirical findings was to inform the interview questions in preparation for the second-field trip. Unfortunately, towards the end of this trip, I consumed food in one of the participant's house and fell extremely ill.

4.5 Reflection stage

The separation stage allowed for a period of critical reflection on both the theoretical framework and the collected data. The above summary of the first-field trip uncovers my position within the research process, demonstrating that research is not static but a dynamic process of constant revelations. My position had shifted after the first field-trip, and this needed consideration from both a conceptual and methodological position. The methodological reflections focussed on how the research was carried out and how did my bias influence the data that was collected? I recognised the way the participants would approach answering questions around socio-cultural practices. The participants needed time to reflect on the questions because they had not been asked these types of questions before, and they were averse to portraying Ethiopian cultural in a negative light. The way in which they answered would be in two or three parts at different stages of the interview. This took up a lot of time therefore, the questions were slightly altered to better capture the data more aligned to the cultural lexicon. An example, when I asked about the mobility of women in public places and if there are any restrictions, the answer was no. This was contrary to my observations and experience. However, after considering her answer, the participant said that women do experience verbal abuse from random men in the street colloquially referred to as *lekefta*. This verbal abuse is sexual in nature and makes women not want to go out in public and at times they fear this verbal abuse may result in them being sexually assaulted. This was then incorporated into the interview questions as, do you ever experience *lekefta*, and if yes how often, where, by who and how does it make you feel?

I recognised that sometimes my response to participants' answers was influenced by my cultural bias, this was evident when reflecting on the interviews with the local historians in

Lalibela. The conceptual weaknesses that were identified related to the need to incorporate more of Moser into the conceptual framework. The original design of the interview questions drew from Kabeer and Chant, the research struggled to address particular tensions around livelihood strategies. Incorporating more of Moser into the framework allowed for the research to address these shortcomings although, I was aware that this would not ensure against potential limitations in the second field-trip.

4.6 The Millennium Development Village Project (MVP)

The second field-trip was designed to collect data on a rural village Koraro in Tigray. Koraro was selected as the main research site of this research because in 2005 the United Nations Millennium Development Village Project (MVP) was launched in Ethiopia, and Koraro was one of eleven villages selected to form part of what the MVP refers to as the Koraro cluster (UN Millennium Project, 2005). The MDG Village Project (MVP) invested in poor rural areas to try and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the poorest and most isolated regions of a country (Millennium Promise, 2015). The overall aim of the MVP initiative was to provide a proof of concept to the international development sector, that a robust 'scientific-approach' to development would yield better results in achieving the MDGs (Wilson, 2014; 2015). However, due to the lack of available data from the Millennium Development Village Project, this research was not able to support or reject any of the statements made by the MVP.

This research attempted to gather data from MVP through its representatives in Ethiopia and the United States, however, these repeated attempts were unsuccessful. I was told to refer to the website for more information about Koraro. The only observable evidence that Koraro was an MVP village was a logo on the community notice-board see photograph 1 below. The Koraro participants did not know anything about the MVP nor were they aware that Koraro was one of the participating villages. The MVP's website (Millennium Village, 2015) on face-value gives the impression that there is a host of downloadable information, but on close inspection, these documents are vague and absent of any reliable data. In light of these factors, this research decided to not incorporate the MVP into this study. However, because of Koraro's agreed upon MVP status as an ecologically fragile community by the government and other international development bodies, this provided for a community to research whereby the external environment had been established.

Photograph 1: Koraro community notice board



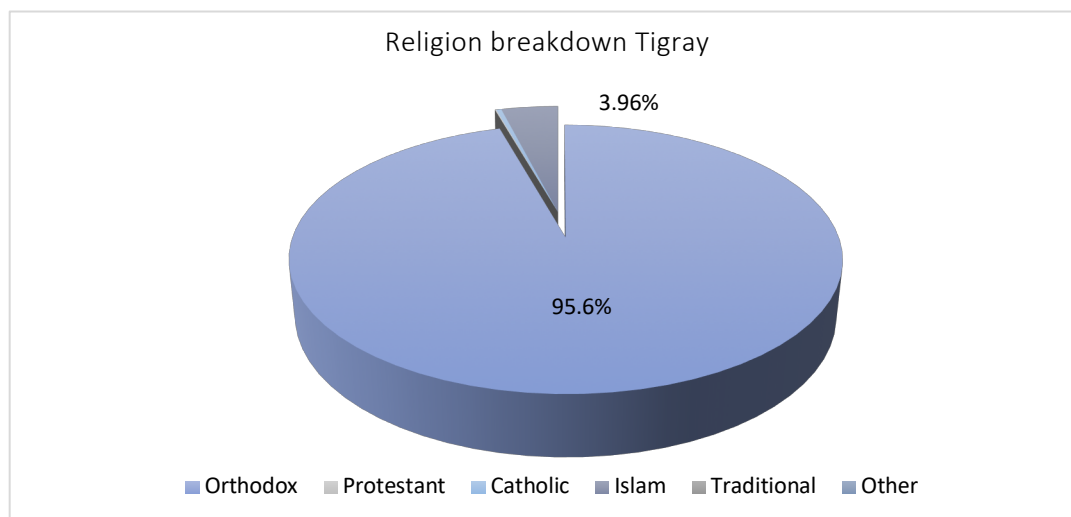
4.7 Second field-trip: October – December 2015

In October 2015 I returned to Ethiopia and travelled directly to Tigray and was in the country until the beginning of December 2015. For the duration of the study, I resided in the small town Hawzen located thirty kilometres from Koraro and commuted to and from the village each day. It is important to note that during the time of this study the region was experiencing a severe drought of pre-famine conditions.

Koraro is a rural village located in the Gheralta Delta region in Ethiopia's Northern Province, Tigray. The area is drought prone and has a highly uneven distribution of seasonal rainfall (Hagos *et al.*, 1999). The Gheralta Delta region is one of the holiest sites for pilgrimage in Ethiopian Christian Orthodoxy. The area is surrounded by rock-hewn churches constructed high within the mountainous valleys and forms part of Ethiopia's rich religious and cultural heritage. It is estimated, a quarter of Tigray's Rock-Hewn churches can be found in this region. Abune Gebre Michael monastery situated in Koraro's mountain plains was said to have been constructed around the seventeenth-century (17th) carved into the mountain and ordained with frescos depicting Ethiopia's religious iconography. It is not uncommon to see women with the Ethiopian Cross tattooed on their foreheads particularly in this region. According to the Ethiopian population census published by the Central Statistical Agency

(CSA) (2007), the dominant religion in this region is Ethiopian Orthodoxy at ninety-five-point-six percent (95.6%) followed by Islam at three-point-ninety-six percent (3.96%), with Catholicism, Protestantism, Traditional and other making-up the remaining point-eighty-eight percent (0.88%) see figure 4 below .

Figure 4: Tigray religion demographics



source: M de Jongh adapted 2007 census data (CSA, 2007)

4.7.1 Koraro village description

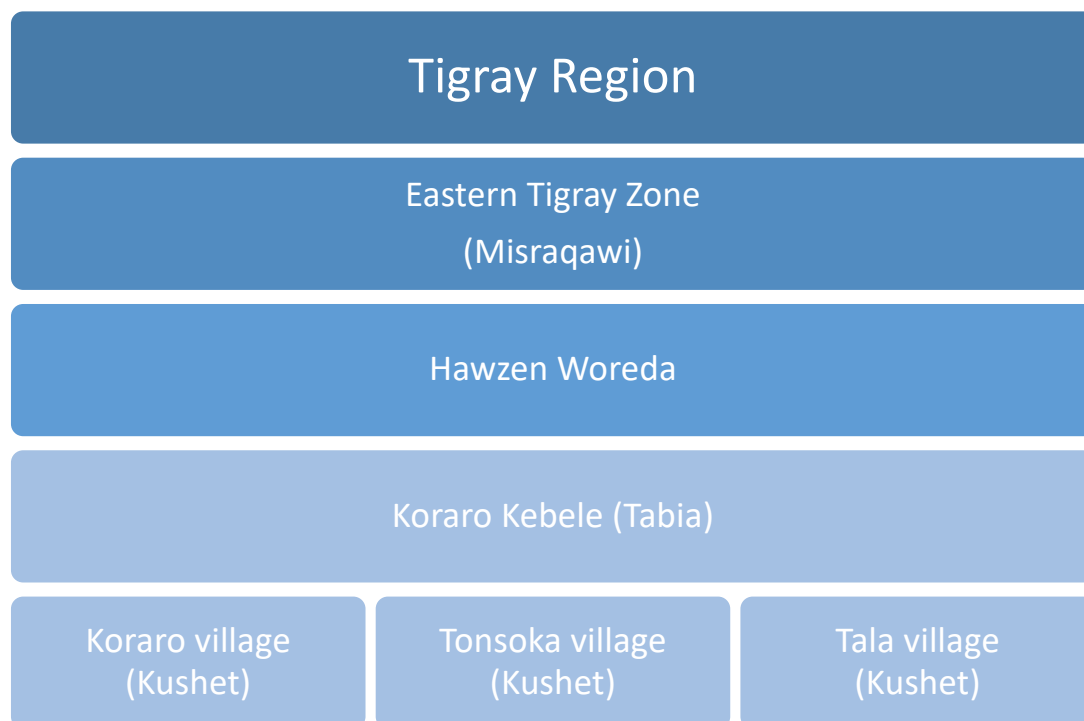
Koraro is one of three rural villages (Kushet) that form Koraro Kebele (Tabia), which is one of twenty-five administrative districts (Kebeles or Tabias) in Hawzen woreda in Eastern Tigray¹⁹ (Misraqawi) highlands²⁰, see figure 5 below for government administration structure. The age of Koraro village itself is questionable with some participants and Hawzen Woreda representatives referring to it as a new village that was formed within the last ten years, whereas others and people from the surrounding areas say that it has been there for much longer. Furthermore, one of the participants aged twenty-seven-years-old was born in Koraro, the Ethiopian population census (2007) reported Koraro's Kebele population figures to be five-thousand six-hundred and eighty-two (5,682). What is known in historical terms is Koraro's mountain range was a stronghold for the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)

¹⁹ Eastern Tigray Woredas: Atsbi Wenberta, Ganta Afeshum, Gulomahda, Hawzen, Irob, Saesi Tsaedaemba, and Wukro.

²⁰ Eastern Tigray is bordered by the Afar region to the east, south eastern Tigray (Dehub Misraqawi) to the south, central Tigray (Mehakelegnaw) to the west, Eritrea to the north.

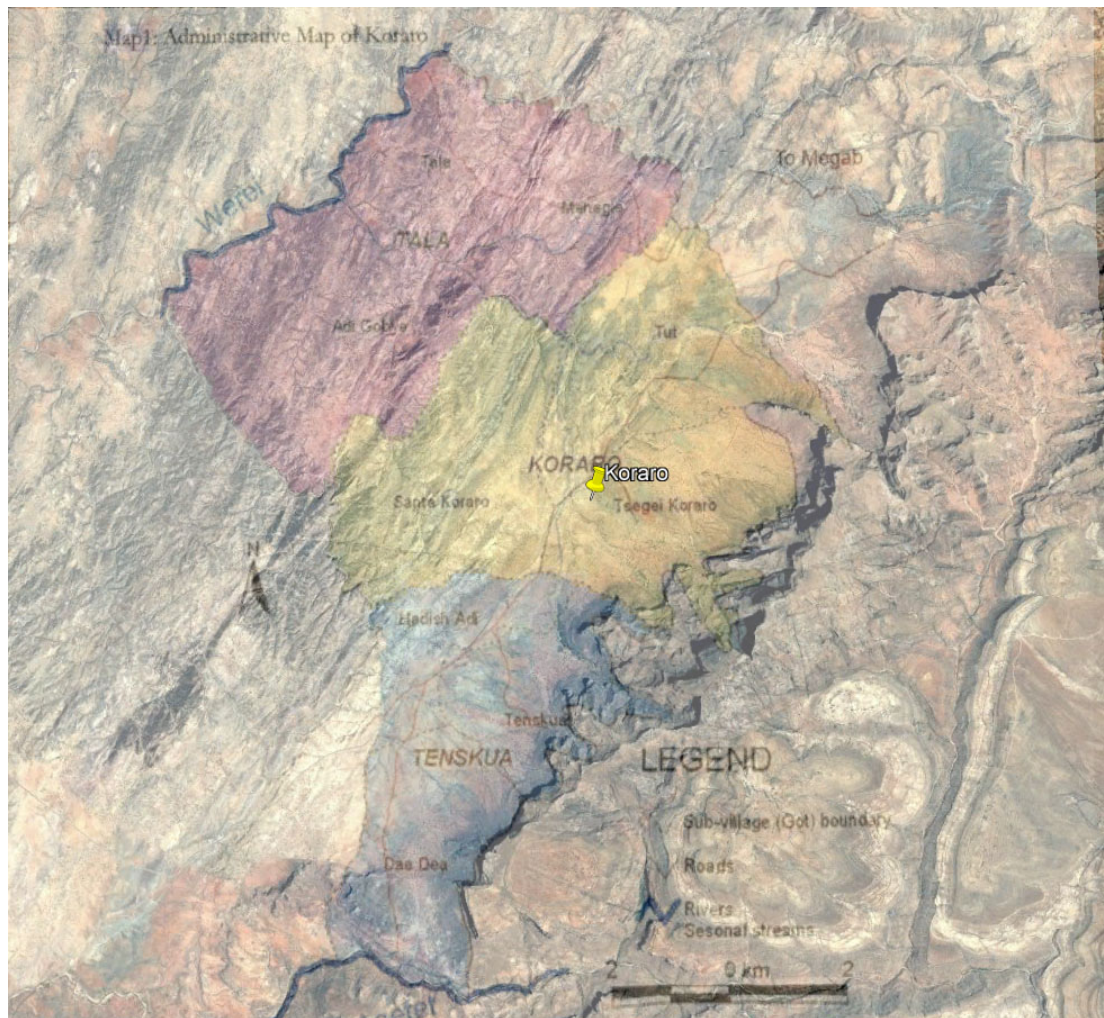
during the revolution between 1974 – 1977, and the construction of Abune Gebre Michael monastery. However, the limited availability of Koraro’s historical and current data, and conflicting accounts on the age and formation of the village leads this research to the assumption that the problem lies with how the local inhabitants in the region define it.

Figure 5: Government administration structure



The two other kushts Tonsoka and Tala which form part of Koraro’s Kebele are a collection of homesteads, whereas Koraro’s kusht is a nuclear village. Although, when you walk towards the mountain range closer to the mountain spring, the housing formation starts to resemble that of scattered homesteads. The Ethiopian government does not categorise rural households into homesteads and individual rural households. Therefore, this research has assumed that Koraro village (kusht) was originally a collection of homesteads, and over recent time it has developed into a nuclear rural village. This may be a result of the village being nominated as the collective political centre housing the Kebele due to its proximity to Hawzen and geographic location between the other two kushts. Another, contributing factor may be due to increased investment in the area, particularly in infrastructure, and/or more available land. Figure 6 below is of an administration map of Koraro Kebele which I have placed over a google earth (Google Earth, 2015) image and pinned Koraro village.

Figure 6: Administrative map Koraro



source: Hawzen administration and Google Earth (2015)

This research verified Koraro's geographical coordinates according to the location of Abune Gebre Michael and Megab village, and from an unpublished Geography MSC thesis (Kiros, 2014) from the University of Mekelle which detail Koraro's coordinates using GIS software. The research then used those coordinates in Google Earth to locate Koraro, and the areal images support assumption made by this research on the formation of Koraro as a nuclear rural village. Figure 7 is an aerial view of Koraro from Google Earth in (2005) whereby there are only a few structures and the Kebele office (Google Earth, 2015). The imagery shows a selection of homesteads around the mountain spring and close to the school. The imagery, therefore, supports the assumption that Koraro was initially a collection of homesteads with government administrative centre. Figure 8, figure 9 and figure 10 aerial photographs (Google Earth, 2015) reveal a different picture; there is a dramatic increase in the number of

houses following an urban style clustering of houses into block formations separated by rudimentary roads, and the emergence of a designated market space for economic trading.

Figure 7: Koraro village aerial photograph 2005



Figure 8: Koraro village aerial photograph 2011



Figure 9: Koraro village aerial photograph 2013



Figure 10: Koraro village aerial photograph 2015



source of above aerial imagery: Google Earth (2015)

4.8 Koraro participant recruitment and access

The research team had to first secure consent from the Kebele to carry out the study, copies of government approval and a letter of recommendation from the University of Addis Ababa were presented. This research used a simple sampling technique, starting from the Kebele's office the research team selected every fourth to fifth households per rudimentary block as seen in the aerial photographs above. However, in the event that no household was available to take part in the study in a particular block, the team moved onto the next block. The selection process took two days, the team had to arrange times to carry out the interviews with the individual participants around their schedules, no interviews were scheduled on market-days or on religious celebration days. The exact population figures for Koraro village are unknown, this research estimated the population figure to be eight-hundred and sixteen (816) based on the total number of households one-hundred and seventy (170) as reported by the Millennium Village Project, multiplied by the average household size in rural Tigray (4.8) based on the Ethiopia Rural Socioeconomic Survey (CSA, 2013). The total number of individual households that participated in this study were thirty-nine (39) twenty-three percent (23%) of the total households in Koraro. The sex demographics of the sample were thirty-six (36) females and three (3) males. Of the female participants twenty-seven (27) headed their own households; seventy-five percent (75%) of the total female participants which equated to sixty-nine percent (69%) of the total sample, see table 2 above for Koraro interview demographics. This research had no prior knowledge

of the female-headed household demographics of Koraro, as mentioned above this data is not available. This research anticipated the female-headed household ratio to be in line with national rural average of twenty-percent (20%) (CSA, 2013) . According to participants and the Kebele officials, Koraro's rapid growth can be attributed to high levels of inward migration from surrounding villages and homesteads – particularly divorced women with dependants. However, in the absence of available data, it is, not possible to confirm that divorced women are overrepresented in Koraro's migration trends. Although the majority of the interviews took place in the private homes of women, this did not stop random men from the community coming into the house to listen to the interview. This happened on several occasions and each time the research team had to ask them to please leave the house as we would like to discuss matters regarding women's health. These men had to be handled carefully because the team was in an isolated community and this had the potential to terminate the study in Koraro. The termination of an interview by a community member happened in another small village in Hawzen wordea called Dugum. The team visited the village on their market day and were invited to a birth celebration of a local young lady who had recently given birth to twins. After paying our respects and presenting the mother with a small gift the team was given a tour around the village, this village is another one of the villages a part of the MVP. The team were invited into the home of a local women for a coffee and subsequently began to carry out a guided interview. The lady also sold traditional alcohol from her house on market day known as a tela house. Although it was a guided interview around tela and agriculture production, a few local men came into the house as patrons and decided to join in on the interview. The elderly man did not like us interviewing the local lady and we were physically removed from the tela house and taken to the Kebele office. We presented the men with the approved paperwork from the government and the letter from the University of Addis Ababa, however, this did not satisfy the elderly man. After some time had passed, I started to feel unsafe and requested that everyone proceeded to the local police station, as these men were armed with rifles and inebriated. This was another situation whereby my gender removed my agency and increased the dependency on the research assistant. Only after I began to call an official in Addis Ababa did the men consent to let the team leave Dugum. On the team's departure, several of the local women came to enquire after me and expressed their apologies for the hostile encounter. Subsequently, the team did not return to Dugum and the incident was reported to the Ethiopian consulate in London. Observational data was collected from Koraro, the surrounding areas in the eastern Tigray region including the regional capital Mekele, and across the regional border into the Afar region. Like the first field trip, religious sites were

visited, local guides and historians were engaged, rural and urban market trading was observed. After the collection of the observational data the I made my way back to Mekele and departed for London.

4.9 Analytical approach

The amount of data I had collected from the two field trips was rich and quite overwhelming when I started to pull the different source materials together. The biggest question was where to start. I need to stress that the documentary analysis was done alongside the analysis of the in-country source material, this was an on-going process of study and review while coding the interview data and field notes into the themes. Consistent with qualitative methods of enquiry my analytical approach was an inductive thematic analysis. The principle of the approach based on 'grounded theory' an inductive process of discovery, where the researcher grounds themselves in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In an inductive analysis, the themes are very strongly linked to the data, the process is data lead and does not try to insert the findings into a pre-existing scheme of codes. There are six stages in the analytic approach: familiarising yourself with the data; generating codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; generating research report (87). I began by transcribing the interviews into individual cases, some of the interviews had been recorded and others were transcripts, some women were not comfortable with being recorded. The audio recordings took a considerable amount of time because of the translations. However, listening back to the interviews I wanted to ensure that I had captured the voices and positions of the participants. The process also allowed me to reflect again on the researcher – research assistant – researched relationship analysing the power dynamics that were in constant play in the interview process (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Being aware in the field of the filtering of information through my research assistants during the interview process, I was trying to the best of my ability to ensure that the questions were being framed correctly. It is important to analyse the interviewer's style and interjections, the prompts can predetermine the participants narrative (Thomas, 1993:39). The playback process allowed me to listen to the participants reflect on their experiences more attentively and hearing their voices I was able to visualise the experience of the interview. The visualisation process was critical for me, when I reread transcripts, I can hear the person's voice in my head, and I was (still am) able to recall the person and the social space of the enquiry. This reinforced on a personal level that I am responsible for how this person's story is going to be represented

to an audience that they do not know. Once all the material data was transcribed into their individual cases, however, instead of coding into smaller nodes, I decided to group the data into the sets of related codes; for example, food insecurity and the environment were related codes, from there numerous themes began emerging. The process of organising the themes and the sub-categories of the themes and linking them together into a narrative to express the lived experiences of women from their standpoint was a very long and intricate process. Observational qualitative data such as imagery was used to support the themes emerging from the interviews. Namely, social, economic, interrelation, environmental and resource architecture. Key examples of this are the marketplace and its gender and economic construct; household and resource economy. At this stage I was also engaging with the documentary analysis, the themes that were revealing themselves from the interview data was driving what documents I would analyse. Further, I engaged with the documentary material to address some tensions in the interview data, establishing the external data on Koraro like environmental shocks and general descriptive data on the region. However, this was a challenging process as available data on Koraro itself is extremely limited, I had to cross- reference a lot of the documentary data, this was because of two main problems: the translation of the government research reports and surveys from Amharic to English; and, the date discrepancies with the Ethiopian calendar. I was aware before the start of the research process that there will be many aspects about the external environment (and not limited to), agricultural production, vegetation growth and historical data, that I would not be familiar with. Thomas (1993) points out that secondary sources are useful by 'revealing the details and nuances of cultural meaning and process' (38). Further, I felt quite strongly that it was essential for me to expand my knowledge base on Ethiopia itself so that I could contextualise the experiences of the women in this study. This also helped me reflect on my cultural bias and question how much I was imposing my ideas of gender inequality and the oppression of women in Ethiopia. Although feminist research is by its very nature political by drawing people's attention to the social injustices of women in patriarchal societies, my intention was not to insert my world view into the consciousness of the women in this study. I was very careful not to use words like oppression, subjugation and submissive, in the findings where this lexicon is introduced it is the language of the participants; oppression, submission and suffering. Once I had established the themes, I started to write the findings into chunks, this process included reflective dialogue with my supervisors. I made it a point to keep the quotes verbatim where I have interjected a meaning it is in square brackets next to the word. The purpose of that is to provide a cultural reference points as to what the participants mean using a word as it was explained to me.

4.10 Research quality

Establishing research quality is not only pertinent to research data, it is also a reflection of the integrity of the researcher. As such, I was continuously aware of the potential impacts personal bias could have on the quality of data. Qualitative research produces a different type of knowledge to quantitative research; therefore, the quality criteria do not necessarily aim to achieve the same outcomes (Morrow, 2005). Lincoln & Guba (1981) argue that the quality parameters for qualitative research differ from quantitative research: *credibility* over validity; *dependability* over reliability; *transferability* over generalisability; *confirmability* over objectivity; and, triangulation cited in (Shenton, 2004).

Critics of the case-study approach argue that the methods of enquiry fail to meet the research quality criteria of quantitative research (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The approach is, therefore, characterised to be unscientific particularly because of its lack of generalisability which is essential to scientific development. Therefore, the majority of the critics sit within the positivist paradigm who reject the approach and qualitative methods of study (ibid). Feminist sociologists criticised quantitative methods arguing that the male perspective dominated the approach, which was not fit-for-purpose to analyse a women's experience (Doucet and Mauthner, 2007). However, the methods used to carry out research is imperative in the development and gender discourse (Beetham, 2012). Many feminist scholars advocate the use of both methods, more work should be done to integrate gender into quantitative methods (ibid). Flyvbjerg (2011) refutes the claim that the case study approach is un-scientific on two accounts; firstly, it is possible to generalise knowledge from one case study, it depends on the case and how it has been selected. Secondly, not all knowledge is generalisable, some knowledge is specific, therefore, this does not warrant its accumulation to be unscientific. In context of this research, the extent of which the findings are generalisable beyond Ethiopia may be questionable. However, this research is seeking to generalise to theory not to statistics.

4.10.1 Research credibility

Validity versus credibility; validity in quantitative research ensures that, the research question tests and measures what it is expected to, and that the findings are an accurate reflection of reality supported by empirical evidence (David and Sutton, 2004). Credibility

questions whether the empirical findings accurately reflect the social reality, therefore, questioning the credibility of the data (Shenton, 2004). Credibility is achievable through prolonged engagement with research participants such as an ethnographic study (Morrow, 2005). However, engaging in a longitudinal ethnographic study was not possible for this research, due to limited financial resources. Therefore, credibility was achieved by the following methods. Firstly, the initial interview questions were assessed and refined during the pilot stage. This helped to shape and inform the interview questions within a context-specific narrative that would help establish credibility in the data gathered. Did the interview questions reflect the social reality engaged in multiple in-depth interviews and observational methods across different regions in Ethiopia. Secondly, there was a period of prolonged engagement with some of the research participants spanning the full duration of the research time in Ethiopia. This allowed for addressing discrepancies in the data-sets while in-country. Thirdly, the use of multiple data collection methods, triangulating the interview, photographic and observational data. Finally, to account for researcher bias at the end of each day, my research assistants and I would reflect on the interview data and the experience of the day. This process of reflection and discussion was essential, I would share my overall thoughts on the data, the interview process, how I perceived the participant's engagement and questioned how we or I was received by the participants. I would ask my research assistants about their experience during the interview process and if I had overlooked or missed anything culturally significant. Furthermore, this process was particularly important to discuss data saturation points and identifying trends in the data.

4.10.2 Research dependability

Reliability versus dependability; reliability in quantitative research ensures that, if the method of enquiry were to be repeated using the same variables, the empirical findings would be similar (Shenton, 2004). Dependability ensures that the manner in which the study was conducted within a particular period of time should be consistent in terms of technique (Morrow, 2005). Reliability is concerned with the method producing similar results and dependability is concerned with the consistency of method and analysis between researchers. The likelihood of two independent researchers reproducing very similar results in qualitative research like this one to ensure reliability is questionable. There are too many contextual variables in situ to account for at the time of this study, environmental, social and

political. Secondly, the presence of researcher bias influences the data collection process. Researcher bias is influenced by gender, age, ethnicity, language, marital status and class. Collecting data in the field is an embodied experience, the characteristics of a female researcher differ from a male researcher not only my experience but that of the participants' experience (Warren and Hackney, 2000). The embodied experience of the researcher must be recognised. In the context of this research, there was another facet to the embodied experience of the researcher, I was dependent on my research assistant(s) for translation. Furthermore, my research assistant(s) were young men, two from urban areas and one from a rural village. The research findings, therefore, must account for the bias of both myself and the research assistant(s). Taking the above into consideration the research set-out to achieve research dependability, through documenting the research methods carried out to establish an audit trail. An audit trail details all the methods, techniques, and analysis in chronological order, to which it may be peer reviewed (Morrow, 2005).

4.10.3 Research transferability and confirmability

Generalisability versus transferability; generalisability from a positivist approach is achieved when the researcher has established a testable hypothesis to which the extent of the analysis represents the population at large through statistical analysis (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Transferability is associated with the ability of the research findings to be transferred to another researcher based on sufficient information of the research context, processes and participants (Morrow, 2005). Qualitative research seeks to generalise to theory. Objectivity claims that research should be free from researcher bias and prejudice. Feminists along with other social scientists have long argued that it is not possible to achieve objectivity in social research (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1989). The creation of knowledge is socially constructed based on what knowledge is to a particular social group (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1989). Confirmability denotes that research is never objective and that the core findings should represent what is being studied rather than my beliefs and bias (Morrow, 2005). This research aims to generalise to theory rather than to statistics. It has been established that objectivity is absent in social research, this research intends to establish confirmability by representing the core findings in the analysis rather than personal belief and bias of the data collected.

Lastly research quality aims to achieve triangulation; triangulation validates the data collected through more than two methods of study. This research achieved triangulation through a multi-method approach; in-depth semi-structured and unstructured interviews were carried out, observational data was collected, and photographs taken (with permission), and an in-depth documentary analysis. However, due to the limited amount of research done on Koraro, this research had to achieve triangulation with research conducted within the same region. Where this was not possible to triangulate regionally, this research sort out additional documentary data from another independent source.

4.10.4 Research ethics

Researching sensitive issues such as gender inequalities and poverty may have ethical implications due to the very nature of the topic at hand. Poverty and gender are contentious issues about which most people have strong opinions. A balance needs to be struck between the 'do no harm' approach, and, the 'integrity of the research process' (Morrell *et al.*, 2012;615). Prior to departing for Ethiopia, I had secured ethics permission from the Ethiopian government by proxy of the University of Addis Ababa and from the University of Winchester's Research Ethics Committee. To protect the identities of participants pseudonyms have been used, and consent was acquired from the participants who were photographed, that extended to acquiring permission from the guardians of children under the age of sixteen years old. Where it was not permissible to acquire consent, the photographs of people's faces have been blurred. Although this was not an ethnographic study, the research team was temporally embedded in the community, as such a research journal was kept, and the research team reflected on participant and community interaction daily. Ethnographies require a researcher to become a part of the community they are studying, while simultaneously they are required to deconstruct their experience into workable data. Therefore, a researcher needs to be constantly reflecting on their behaviour and be aware of their potential impacts (Morrell *et al.*, 2012). However, as a security measure, the research team resided in a local hotel in Hawzen, each day the team would commute to and from Koraro. Although I was well prepared in the field, an unforeseen ethical problem arose in the field to which I used my moral judgement. One of my research assistants suffered a small degree of emotional trauma after one day of interviewing, it was a day that participants were disclosing sensitive information. Although I was aware that my

research could potentially impact the participants, I did not account for the impact it was going to have on my research assistants. I decided to alter the data collection strategy for the following days, instead of collecting interview data and we collected observational data from the surrounding areas and at the monasteries.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodological approach used in this research. The chapter described how the field-work was carried out in Ethiopia and the limitations that were experienced. The following chapters five, six and seven will address and analyse the findings to investigate the research aim and objectives. Chapter five examines the relationship between Koraro's ecological landscape and female-headed households' vulnerability to poverty. Chapter six explores the entitlements and obligations of women in Koraro, and how these promote the vulnerability to poverty of female-headed households. Chapter seven examines the economic participation (i.e. work) of women in Koraro. Chapter eight concludes the above chapters and discusses this research's contribution to the feminisation of poverty thesis and to the gender and development discourse.

Chapter Five: Ecology of Koraro

5 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the relationship between the ecological landscape; characteristics of geographic locale, external shocks (environmental, economic, social and political), and macrosocial institutional arrangements, and female-headed households' vulnerability to poverty. This is explored through the close examination of two inter-related questions; how does Koraro's ecological landscape shape the vulnerability of all women to poverty, and what are the coping strategies of female-headed households to sustain the external shocks? Considered through Koraro's previously underexamined ecology of vulnerability and poverty, these questions are addressed through the experiences of thirty-six women, the coping strategies of twenty-seven female-headed households, and relevant secondary data from the documentary analysis. The chapter begins with the exploration of Koraro's ecological landscape and capital asset portfolio. This section examines how Koraro's fragile natural environment and poorly developed infrastructure shapes the capabilities of women to meet the basic needs and social well-being of their households. Further, the section addresses how the ecological landscape increases the burdens of women's reproductive labour and the effects on their personal well-being.

The following section Koraro and food security examines the impacts of the regional droughts on local agricultural production, market conditions, food insecurity and Koraro's hungry season. This section examines the household coping strategies, providing new insights into the intra-household dynamics of female-headed households during the annual hungry season. The coping strategies of women reveal a common theme which is continuously explored throughout this research, the interdependent relationship between female-headed households. The following section household interdependency and livelihoods begins to explore this theme more closely by going beyond food security assessing other interdependent aspects of women's livelihood strategies revealing the importance of social capital. The section examines the myriad of variables that shape women's accumulation of social capital uncovering the heterogeneous relationships of female-headed households.

Finally, the chapter explores the macrosocial institutional arrangements to address Koraro's food insecurity and household assistance. The section food insecurity, government policies and livelihoods, explores how women try to access the Productive Safety Net Programme,

food aid and micro credit as part of their household recovery strategies after the hungry season. The concluding section of the chapter summarises the key findings and contributions of this chapter to the feminisation of poverty thesis.

5.1 Ecological landscape and capital asset portfolio

At the time of this study in 2015, Koraro along with other regions in Ethiopia²¹ were experiencing a catastrophic El Niño induced drought²² with widespread harvest failures, livestock deaths, an acute rise in malnutrition²³, and the spread of communicable diseases as reported by the World Food Programme (WFP, 2016a). In Ethiopia the environmental hazards are cyclical and the country experiences droughts on average every two years²⁴ with some years reaching pre-famine conditions regions affecting millions of people²⁵, the Tigray region is one of the regions that is continuously under threat (FAO, 2006;2013; Singh *et al.*, 2016). Koraro like other Ethiopian agrarian areas is dependent on seasonal rainfall patterns²⁶ making the community sensitive to climate change. The village's natural asset portfolio is fragile with poor soil quality and rain fed-irrigation, limited water supply, and the area is at risk to environmental hazards and shocks. Similarly, its poorly developed physical asset portfolio is attributed to its rapid evolution from scattered homesteads into a small developing nuclear, rural village. Koraro's poor housing, infrastructure, lack of sanitation facilities²⁷, and, poor education and health-care facilities impact the capabilities of women to meet the basic needs and social well-being of their households. The findings suggest there is an asymmetrical relationship between health deprivation and Koraro's physical capital. Photograph 2 is an aerial photograph of Koraro taken from Abune Gebre Michael Monastery

²¹ Tigray, Somalia, Oromia and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples.

²² The drought left thirty-percent (1,239,799 people) of the Tigray population in need of emergency food aid tripling Ethiopia's humanitarian needs (WFP, 2016a).

²³ The World Food Programme (WFP) was tasked to assist the Ethiopian Government to meet the nutritional needs of 7.6 million people out of 10.2 million in 2016 (ibid)

²⁴ Ethiopia recent drought years: 1983, 1987, 1989 total population affected 21 250 000; 1997, 1998, 1999 total population affected 5 886 200; 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009 total population affected 27 800 000; 2011, 2012 total population affected 5 805 679 (FAO, 2013).

²⁵ The 2002/3 El Niño related drought affected 15 million Ethiopians (Singh, et al., 2016).

²⁶ The main rainy agricultural production season is between September and February known as the Meher season, and the short rainy season is known as the Belg season (CSA, 2015a).

²⁷ According to the DHS report 2011 44.8% of the rural population have no sanitation facilities and use the bush and 45.4% use pit latrines (CSA, 2012).

at the top of the mountain, the photograph portrays Koraro's nuclear village, the surrounding homesteads and agricultural holdings, the road to Hawzen and the distance from the village to the school. The following two photographs 3 and photograph 4 are street views of the village, these photographs portray Koraro's rudimentary infrastructure, the expanding electrical cables, however, the electrical supply is unreliable and limited to a few households. Photograph 3 is of the Kebele office, in this image there is a satellite dish on one of the houses, however, this was not common in the village – the vehicle in the background was the researcher's transportation. Photograph 4 was taken at a different location in the village. In this photograph, there is a structure labelled rooms for rent, this was a common observation in Koraro. These rooms are small transient spaces occupied by new migrants, they are rented until the occupant can acquire land from the Kebele to build a house or is able to rent a house, two of the participants rented rooms next to each other with their infants. Rooms for rent are in high demand and can become overcrowded as available housing is scarce in the village.

Photograph 2: Aerial photograph of Koraro



Photograph 3: Koraro village one



Photograph 4: Koraro village two



Natural capital is essential for rural communities to sustain their livelihoods; land, water, forests, minerals and other environmental resources (Carney, 1998; Booth *et al.*, 1998 cited in Rakodi, 1999). Arable land is a critical productive asset for agricultural production, and land is fundamental for shelter which in Koraro becomes an essential productive asset for female-headed households. Chapter six examines the socio-cultural processes that shape the acquisition of land for women, and chapter seven explores the conversion of shelters

into essential productive assets demonstrating this is not only a social phenomenon of the poor in urban areas (Moser, 2007;2009). Households are highly dependent on Koraro's communal natural resources. Water is collected from the mountain spring²⁸, there are several hand-dug wells scattered through the landscape, and a community hand pump which is controlled by the Kebele. Research by Mekelle University found the quality of the spring's drinking water to be very high, whereas the quality of the water in the hand-dug wells to be very poor and hazardous to people's health (Nedaw, 2010). There is a link between the spread of malaria and the poor water infrastructure in Hawzen wordea, the prevalence rate of malaria substantially increases after the rainy-season from widespread water stagnation. The Kebele distributes mosquito-nets in Koraro as part of the efforts of the government to reduce overall malaria rates, all the participants had mosquito-nets hanging over their beds. Research carried out in Simret village in Hawzen wordea found that high malaria transmission rates are attributed to hand-dug irrigation systems across the region where water stagnates very quickly (Chung, 2016). Women and girls in Ethiopia and across sub-Saharan Africa are more vulnerable to malaria (Anderson and Ray, 2010) this is because of their poorer health and their higher exposure to contaminated water bodies while collecting the household's water. Local wood is gathered for fuel and is used to fence around the house along with thorny bushes to protect against wild animals, mainly hyenas. The local sandstone (Kiros, 2014) and mudstone (Nedaw, 2010) is used as a natural building material to construct houses and other structures, this is a common practice across rural areas whereby houses and communities are constructed with available local natural resources. The roofs and windows of the houses are made from corrugated iron sheets, large stones are placed on the roofs to prevent them from falling off, this can be seen in all the photographs of Koraro. However, the roofs are prone to leakages and walls of the houses can become damp, the floors, bench and bed are constructed out of mud. The houses usually have two doors front and back, however, depending on the house usually one of the doors will lead into an enclosed fenced area with a gate depending which side of the house is fenced off. Here women may keep small domestic animals such as chickens or goats, this area is also used as an outdoor kitchen and household storage, some of the houses may enclose this area with thatch or corrugated roof. Photograph 5 below is of a participant's house, her house has access to electricity, which she converts into a productive service by selling mobile phone charging services, in the background is a tela house, a home

²⁸ During the rainy season, several springs along the mountain range develop as the water rises through the sandstone (Nedaw, 2010).

enterprise that serves traditional alcohol. The natural fence is located at the front of the house and in photograph 6 the entrance gate is visible at another participant's house. Covering some of the external walls with mud over the stone bricks was quite common, this can be seen more clearly in photograph 7 on the home enterprise and photograph 8 is of houses under construction.

Photograph 5: Koraro participant house one



Photograph 6: Koraro participant house two



Photograph 7: Koraro village three



Photograph 8: Houses under construction



Typically, rural household asset portfolios are directly and indirectly linked to subsistence agricultural production. The intra-household assets reflected the socio-cultural roles of women even in households that were classified as agricultural holders, there were no productive agriculture assets – farming equipment, seeds and fertilisers – this phenomenon

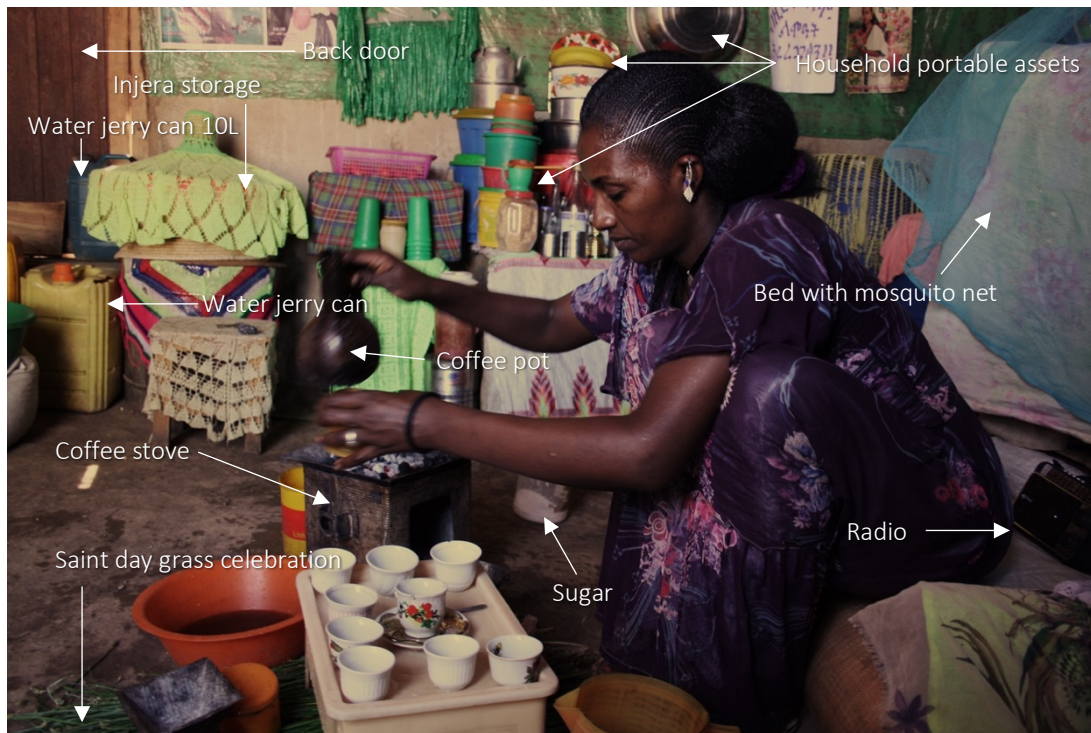
is explored in more detail in chapter six. The following photograph 9 to photograph 13 are of a participant's house and home enterprise, the images provide perspective of the domestic space of the household and the transient productive space of the home enterprise. Mud is mixed with stone to create a type of cement making the structures more durable, mud floors, walls, bench and bed, in some houses the participants had a small thin mattress on the bed. There are bags of grain stored around the room, however, this method of grain storage is said to be problematic, the grain is at risk of becoming contaminated from water, moisture, fungus and pests. There are ten to twenty-five-litre water jerry-cans stacked against the back door which leads to the enclosed outside space where the participant keeps her chickens. In these photographs, there are several portable durable assets, which are typical of women. This is a one-room house and home enterprise, and it is of average size, the house has access to electricity where the participant provides mobile phone charging services, the bed is covered with a mosquito net, and the participant has a radio.

Photograph 9: Inside participant house one



Photograph 10 and photograph 11 are of the coffee-ceremony which was carried out on a sacred saint-day, the coffee-pot is made out of clay and the coffee stove is made out of old large repurposed USAID food oil tin, in the corner of photograph 11 are the tela storage bins and in the bottom right corner there is an arrow pointing to the front door of the house.

Photograph 10: Inside participant house two



Photograph 11: Inside participant house three



In photograph 12 the mud bench is more visible, and the bag of grain is next to the front door, the participant's niece and neighbour's children are in this photograph, this was a common observation, young children predominantly boys would roam freely between the houses of their close neighbours.

Photograph 12: Inside participant house four



Photograph 13: Outside participant house



In the above photograph 13 the participant is preparing to make injera an Ethiopian staple made from teff flour, she has two outdoor stoves made from clay with cast iron plates and heated using fuelwood. The neighbour is using one of the stoves to bake the tela-mix, it is common for female-headed households to utilise each other's assets and engage in

domestic work together, intra-household relationships are fundamental assets for female-headed households and is continuously explored throughout this research, below is a quote from Zenaye about her neighbours:

‘My neighbours are my family, we help each other keep each other’s secrets’ – Zenaye.

Grass is collected for basket weaving and is used for roof thatching on some houses and homesteads. It also has important social value as it is used in various ceremonies and for celebrating sacred religious saint days during the course of the month, see photograph 10 and photograph 11 above. Wild foods are foraged and are an essential part of the local diet during the hungry months. The hungry months are characterised as household seasonal nutrition deprivation, this is a consequence of the short-term environmental shocks experienced in Koraro. Regional droughts and floods impact the agricultural production seasons of peasant farmers and pastoral herders (Stephen and Farmer, 2015:6) this influences how women manage their household’s food stocks, seasonal nutrition deprivation is examined more closely in the following sections.

Photograph 14: Koraro village four



Koraro’s natural capital is the rudimental component of various essential first-generation physical, productive and human capital assets. The erosion of Koraro’s natural resources

leads to the erosion of other essential household assets shaping the first- and second-generation asset accumulation strategies of female-headed households. Howard and Smith (2006) found in their research in Tigray that female-headed households are more dependent on communal natural assets, and the availability of particular communal assets such as fuelwood, grass and wild foods was becoming scarcer. Women were increasingly having to purchase these resources from the local markets. The fragility of Koraro's natural capital contributes to the depletion of female-headed households limited financial resources thus, increasing their vulnerability to withstand short and long-term shocks. All the participants categorically stated that environmental hazards were the cause of food insecurity, the spread of infectious water-borne diseases, the death of livestock, and the increase of women's reproductive labour burdens. The participants said that they need to allot more time to collect water, fuelwood and other communal natural assets. Access to the community hand-pump was restricted by the Kebele because the water table was rapidly depleting, below is an excerpt from Mebrit describing the situation of the village hand pump:

‘And water supply; Koraro is divided into 4 groups to receive water. We get water on the 4th day we get one plastic jug 25L. We have to line up our water jugs in order to go get water’ – Mebrit.

Furthermore, the water pump frequently breaks down from overuse and it can take up to several weeks to repair, and the community is responsible to pay for the repairs. However, this financial responsibility falls disproportionately to the women of Koraro, female-headed households are overrepresented in the community demographics and, the provision of household water is a socio-cultural obligation ascribed to women and girls, chapter six examines the household and community obligations of women. Mebrit believes that the Kebele is deliberately not repairing the pump properly to extort money from the community, the rest of her quote reveals her mistrust of the Kebele and their authority:

‘...the Kebele arrange for some of the fixers for the water pump come and don't fix it problem and get paid 3,000 birr [EBT]²⁹ the community has to pay them. The world is totally corrupt. The poor works for the rich...’ – Mebrit.

The mountain spring is located two-kilometres from the village making the average travelling time on foot about forty-five minutes through the uneven terrain, however, the travel time is roughly doubled on the return journey from the weight of the filled jerry-cans. Jerry-cans

²⁹ At the time of this study \$1.00 USD equalled 21.09 ETB.

range from five to twenty-five-litre canisters, the average size carried on the backs of women is between twenty and twenty-five litres, however, if women are carrying an infant on their backs, they will carry two ten-litre canisters one in each hand. Women and young children can spend up to three hours collecting water from the mountain spring, the amount of time spent collecting water depends on the water needs of the household. The following imagery below is a selection of photographic data of Koraro's geographic locale and the impacts of the El Niño induced drought on the water supply. The fragility of Koraro's locale is displayed in figure 11 this is an aerial view of the village with the location and distance to the mountain spring, and of the dried-up (rain-fed) rivers, image was taken from Google Earth (2015).

Figure 11: Koraro water source aerial view



Photograph 15 is of Koraro's natural spring located under the tree in the centre of the image and photograph 16 is a close-up of the spring showing water stagnation. The kebele installed a tap close to the spring drawing water directly from the source below ground displayed in photograph 17 in the bottom right corner the spring-tap. The photograph displays the gabion³⁰ boxes used to terrace the terrain to protect the farmlands below from terrain hazards, flooding and landslides, and the school is visible in the distance.

³⁰ Gabions are galvanized steel wire-mesh and stones. 'The intrinsic flexibility of a gabion structure enables it to bend rather than break, thereby preventing loss of structural efficiency. Since gabions are bound together, they will withstand a degree of tension that would severely test a drystone construction and be dangerous with plain concrete and masonry' (FAO, 2001, forward).

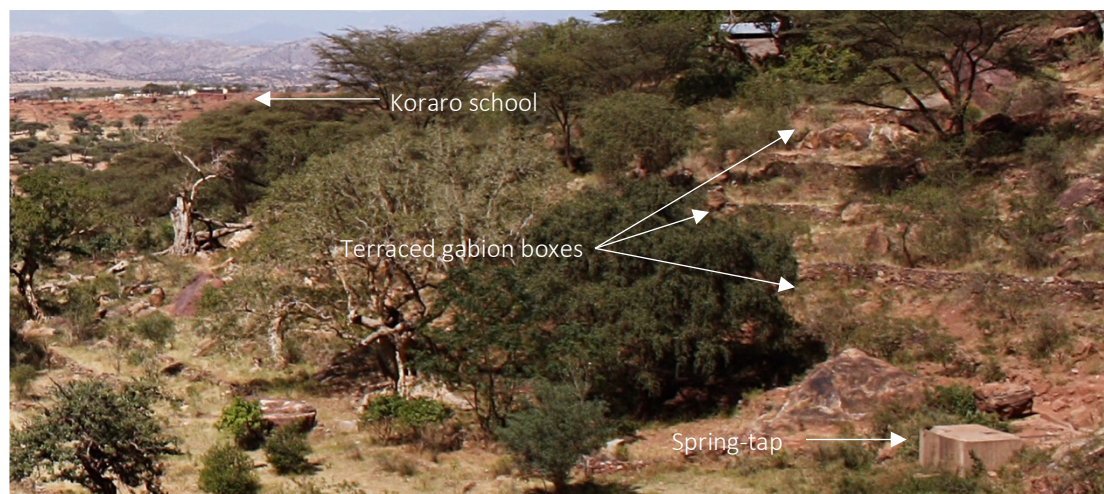
Photograph 15: Koraro mountain spring



Photograph 16: Close-up of mountain spring



Photograph 17: Koraro spring well



Photograph 18 was taken from the spring, the image displays the dried-up seasonal river runoff from the spring with Koraro in the distance. The seasonal river irrigates the surrounding agricultural holdings through flooding during the rainy season, these holdings

are more arable than other farmlands located further away from the water source. During the rainy season, the hand-dug wells used for agricultural are refilled and the water is used to irrigate the surrounding farm holdings, however, this irrigation practice can only serve the nearby holdings close to the wells. At the end of the rainy season, the remaining water begins to stagnate and increases the spread of malaria in the area.

Photograph 18: Koraro seasonal river runoff

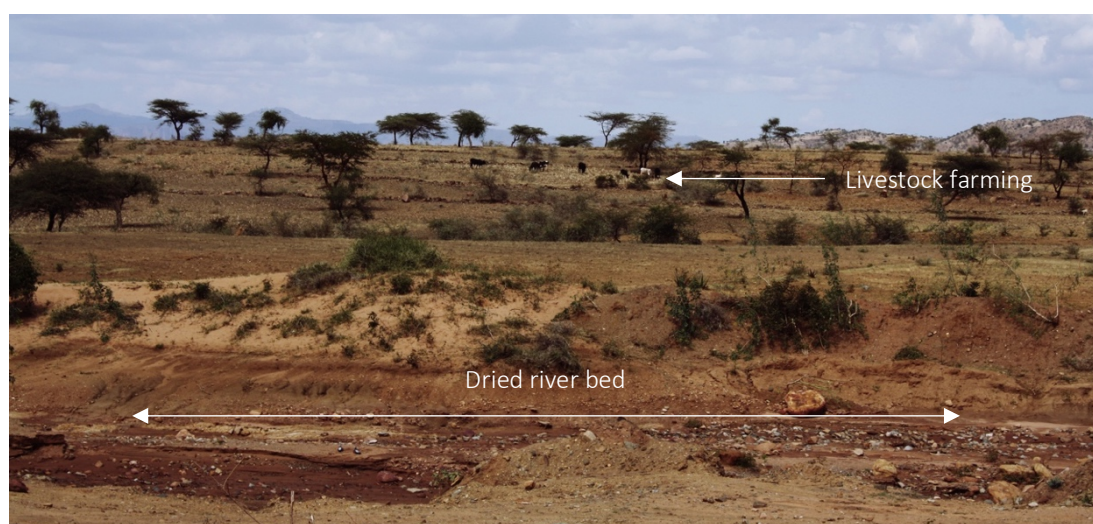


Photograph 19 and photograph 20 depict the dried-up river beds around Koraro displaying the fragility of the landscape and the impacts of the drought on the region's water supply.

Photograph 19: Dried-up river bed Koraro one



Photograph 20: Dried-up river bed Koraro two



The environmental hazards increase the amount of time women and children (predominately young girls) spend on washing the household's clothes. The clothes are usually washed downstream to prevent contaminating the drinking water however, women and young girls must walk further from Koraro to find suitable streams, the average travelling time is about sixty-minutes from the village. A considerable amount of time is spent on washing clothes and this task can take several hours to most of the day. Women generally travel to the suitable location in small groups to socialise and assist each other and to better ensure their personal safety, this is explored in depth in the following chapters six and seven. Photograph 21 below depicts a young woman and two children washing their clothes and collecting water in one of the flowing streams located in the area. In this photograph, the young boy is carrying a ten-litre jerry can and there are two green bottles on the rock next to the girl's feet – bottle shoes. This was a common observation in the region, bottles are repurposed and used as a substitute for shoes, the bottles are tied to the feet with a piece of string, plastic or rope, resembling flip-flop shoes. The following photograph 22 and photograph 23 were taken in another area in Eastern Tigray, both photographs are of the same river from different angles revealing the impacts of the drought. In photograph 22 there is a young woman carrying a large bundle of clothes on her back through the dried river-bed which has pockets of stagnant water bodies which are more visible in photograph 23. Once women have finished washing their clothes the clothes are left out to dry while they continue with their other reproductive tasks before returning to collect the dry clothes. Some households (mainly homesteads) may have access to a donkey to help with the transportation of clothes, water and other goods as seen in photograph 23 below, although, none of the participants had access to a donkey. However,

it was not common to see women using donkeys, donkeys are a valuable productive asset and their use was more common with men. It is more common for women to own small domestic livestock such as goats and chickens, chapter six explores the productive asset entitlements of women, and how they shape the asset accumulation strategies of female-headed households.

Photograph 21: Washing clothes and collecting water



Photograph 22: Washing clothes one



Photograph 23: Washing clothes two



The findings suggest there is a relationship between Koraro's poor physical and natural asset portfolio, environmental hazards and the reproductive burdens of women. Women are becoming more time-poor through the erosion of their (already) limited personal-time impacting their well-being and increasing their vulnerability to water-borne diseases. This has further time implications for women who run small non-farm enterprises³¹ from their homes whereby natural resources become productive resources to manufacture economic products such as food and beverages, and domestic crafts. Some women derive their household income from collecting water and selling to other households in Koraro. Chapter seven examines non-farm enterprises and the economic participation of women in the community in more detail.

Many of the participants defined development in relation to Koraro's physical infrastructure development, focusing on the provision of utilities, services, health-care and education, and its impacts on human capital development. The participants describe how the social well-being of girls and women is entwined with the development of the village physically, economically, environmentally, politically and socially. Some of the participants felt that the

³¹ 'Non-farm Enterprises (NFE): Over half of small-town area households and one in five rural households own one or more NFE. These are very small household businesses, mostly not employing any outside labour. Lack of financial services, markets and transport infrastructures constrain setting up or expanding an NFE business' (CSA, 2013:4-5).

lack of development in Koraro compared to Hawzen or Megab was caused by the elected officials not delivering on their promises. However, only one woman is represented in the Kebele holding an administration position, the lack of female representation in the Kebele means the needs of women are underrepresented in a village where women are demographically overrepresented. Below are excerpts selected from three participants reflecting on development in Koraro and how it relates to them personally and to the wider-community Makda, Rug and Ftaw:

‘I believe that there is no development; there is no electricity service, no phone service network, no full water supply, not enough roads - in my opinion, there is no development. Until I benefit from such services from the government, I don’t think there is much development at all. I am sick and cry for the development from the government’ – Makda.

‘Development in the economy, there needs to be no corruption in the society and in the government workers - this is development for me. Development in education, no discrimination, women and men, sons, daughters, old young to have equality, have love respect and the discipline in the law. If there is a high school in the community especially for girls, they don’t have the ability to go to Hawzen or Megab to go to high school. They will be able to learn here in their society - their families can look after them. Development is access to school and good health’ – Rugu.

‘Life is different in village compared to the city, life is darkness here; there is not enough supply, clinics hospitals, its far from here. I would choose to live in the city, I prefer the city, you become more clean and you become educated, and its better for the children they become more clean and educated. I have never lived in the city, that is what I think life in the city is like. I want to work in a hotel in the city’ – Ftaw.

The capabilities of women to provide for their households is shaped through Koraro’s ecological landscape, ten of the participants defined poverty as an environmental phenomenon, below Dinha and Mimi describe how environmental hazards were shaping poverty in Koraro:

‘Nowadays everyone is poor because the weather condition changed and becomes too hot; if you don’t have food to eat or any to share with others, that makes the poverty go up. I complaining to god why is there no rain. We haven’t had enough rain that’s why there isn’t enough farmland and seeds’ – Dinha.

‘There is not enough rain for this season, if the farmers dot get enough seeds they can not distribute enough food to the society, this makes the society in poverty. Poverty is the thing that can make people sick, to not be able to do the things for their households’ – Mimi.

Research by Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) in Ethiopia found that the cumulative impacts of consecutively poor rainy seasons and droughts reduce the ability of households to sustain shocks. Therefore, placing vulnerable households in a chronic state of food insecurity as they are unable to recover between seasons (USAID, 2003). Longitudinal research in the region shows that the percentage of chronic food insecure woredas has been increasing incrementally, in 2003 forty-seven-percent (47%) of Tigray's woredas were food insecure and by 2009 ninety-one-percent³² (91%) of the region was classified as chronically food insecure (World Food Programme, 2009). In May 2015, Koraro³³ was classified as a priority two hotspot district, however, the environmental shock caused by the El Nino drought placed the woreda as a priority one hotspot district in March 2016³⁴ (OCHA, 2016). Food security is fundamental to circumvent nutrition deprivation and improve human capital endowments, such as health, life quality and expectancy (Kabeer, 1994:142). The strategies of female-headed households to circumvent nutrition deprivation and cope during the hungry season is examined in detail in the following sections below.

5.2 Koraro and food security

At the beginning of the Ethiopian new year in September (Meskerem) women divide their grain according to the seasonal needs of the household and set aside a small amount of grain for the following year. The meticulous management of the household grain is done to sustain the anticipated short and long-term environmental and economic shocks. Food consumption patterns increase during the colder months and decrease during the warmer months with household seasonal nutrition deprivation experienced in the months leading up to the harvest season. The above findings align with the Ethiopian Rural Socioeconomic Survey (CSA, 2013:60) and with the research of Stephen and Farmer (2015). Furthermore, Stephen and Farmer found that the hunger season phenomenon is experienced across Ethiopia at different times during the year corresponding with regional pre-harvest

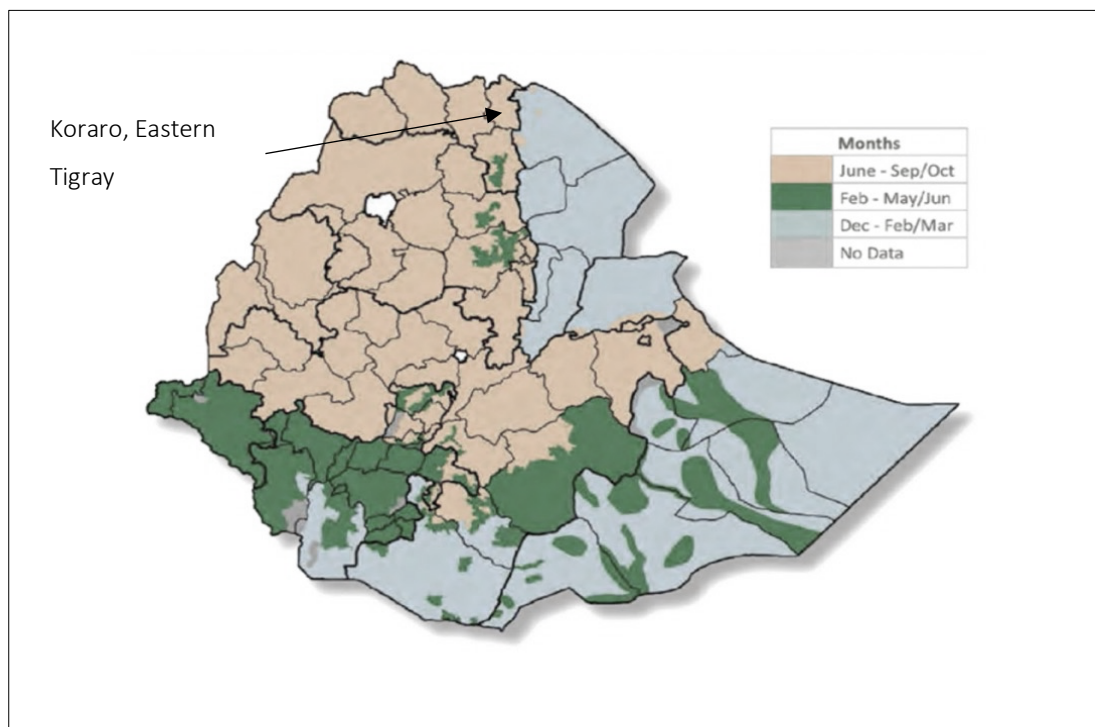
³² Only three Western Tigray woredas were classified as food secure – Kafta-Humera, Welkayte and Tsegede (WFP, 2009).

³³ The entire Hawzen woreda.

³⁴ In 2016, the prolonged drought of 2015 forced the Government of Ethiopia to 'reclassify four-hundred and forty-three (443) Woredas to two-hundred and nineteen (219) priority one hotspot districts an increase from one-hundred and eighty-six (186) Woredas from December 2015; one-hundred and forty-seven (147) priority two hotspot districts; and, seventy-seven (77) priority three hotspot districts' (USAID, 2016:1).

seasons³⁵. Figure 12 below illustrates the regional hungry months across Ethiopia. Koraro's nutrition deprivation season is from June to October, however, coinciding with the season is an increase in the consumption patterns of wild foods in Koraro. Howard and Smith (2006) found in their research that the collection and consumption patterns of wild foods are seasonal, with an increase in consumption between June and August. As previously mentioned in the above section, female-headed households are dependent on the availability of wild foods in communal vegetation areas which are becoming scarcer.

Figure 12: Ethiopia hungry months map



source: Atlas of Ethiopia livelihoods cited in (Stephen and Farmer, 2015:6)

In Mullu's excerpt below she reflects on how women manage their household's food stocks, the seasonality of food consumption, and the gendering of this obligation, which is further explored in detail in the following chapter six:

³⁵ In 'cropping areas where the *Meher* harvest dominates', the hunger season is typically from 'June to September/October', the *Meher* crop is harvested between October – February and is dependent on the *Kiremt* rains (mid-June to mid-September) for majority of the highland regions – Tigray, Oromia, SNNPR, and most of Amhara. In '*Belg* producing' regions the hunger season is typically from 'February to May/June. In pastoral livelihood zones, the main hunger season is from December to February/March' (Stephen and Farmer, 2015:5).

‘We finish our food early in the warmer months, so for the cold season, we have like nothing. And, the cold season [June- September/October], so people have to eat very frequently – so we also consider those things. So we think like this way; I know the amount I need at what time of the year, and how much I need. Savings is common, but the type of saving is different, we will reserve some extra grain for the next year, there is fear about what is to come in the future. It is, the only the women who save, even in household where the man is the head, it is, only the women who save not the man, they are always drinking and not saving for their children. You see we are always worry when the time comes, there might be a shortage at some point’ – Mullu.

Except for two participants³⁶, all female-headed households self-identified as being in a state of constant food insecurity. The participants reported that they were unable to purchase grain in the market place because grain had become too expensive, and their limited financial resources were diminishing. The rural economy is driven by agricultural production and short-term environmental shocks lead to short-term economic shocks. The drought removes the capabilities of the participants to save some grain for the following year and extends the duration of the hungry season. The environmental shocks, therefore, shift households that are in a state of occasional nutrition deprivation to a state of chronic nutrition deprivation. Applying Moser’s (2007) vulnerability analysis to the lives of female-headed households, the examination of their vulnerability to nutrition deprivation requires the identification of the ‘threat, resilience and recovery’ from the negative impacts of Koraro’s changing environment. The threat of constant reoccurring environmental shocks prolongs the food insecure seasons with the potential risk of famine. The resilience of female-headed households comes from adjusting food coping strategies utilised during the hungry months to sustain the shock of the extended hungry season, and their recovery strategy is to replenish highly eroded food stocks by all available means in preparation for the following year. However, both the resilience and recovery phases are essential parts of second-generation asset accumulation strategies – to prevent the erosion of well-being. The participants expressed the three most common recovery methods utilised are to register with Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), receive food aid distributed by the Kebele, or apply for a micro-credit loan. However, the ability to utilise these recovery strategies is determined by macro-economic policies and other external factors, this is

³⁶ However, the two participants who did not self-identify as being highly food insecure still manage their grain stock in the same manner.

examined in closer detail in food insecurity and government policies in this chapter.

Environmental hazards and shocks are one of the key drivers that reduce output levels by farmers, decreasing overall food availability and depleting household food stocks. Food security relates not only to agricultural production and expansion but, includes the functioning of the entire economy (Sen, 1999). Droughts and floods have a direct impact on both local food supply and on Ethiopia's gross domestic product (GDP) (FAO, 2013) thereby, affecting the functioning of the entire economy. Despite the agricultural sector supporting forty-two percent (42%) of the country's total GDP, Ethiopia imports large quantities of cereals (CSA, 2015; Stephen and Farmer, 2015). The country also has a high dependency on donor food aid. The World Bank found that in Ethiopia agricultural households in the poorest decile produce 'less than three months of consumption than other poor households' (World Bank; 2015:20-21). Applying Sen's (1999) food entitlements argument to Koraro, the agricultural production endowments of female-headed households are extremely-low and do not meet the annual consumption needs of their households. Table 3 below represents the number of households classified as agricultural households³⁷ in line with the Ethiopian Government's definition, twenty-two percent (22%) of the female-headed household sample are classified as agricultural households. However, being classified as an agricultural household does not mean that the household's economic livelihood is directly supported through agricultural production. The capabilities to adapt agricultural land into subsistence resources is dependent on productive physical and human assets – livestock, seeds, farming equipment – farming skills and labour. The low production endowments of female-headed households are connected to the utilisation of their agricultural lands in sharecropping schemes with male farmers. There are cultural norms that restrict women from independently farming their land and force women to engage in unequal agreements with men whereby, they are only entitled to one-quarter of the land's produce. These schemes are embedded in the gender relations between female holders and male farmers in the community which contribute to the erosion of female agricultural household's food entitlements. Studies by the World Bank (2015a) across Ethiopia found female agricultural households to be twenty-three to twenty-five percent (23-25%) less productive than male farming households. The production capabilities of female holdings are embedded in the

³⁷ All households holding agricultural land tenures are classified by the Ethiopian Government as agricultural households.

wider socio-cultural norms that shape the entitlements and obligations of women and are closely examined in chapter six.

Table 3: Agricultural households

Agricultural Household type	Economic Livelihood Groups	Female-headed household	Divorce	Widow	Male-Headed Household	Married
Agriculture Sharecropping	Day trader	1	1	0	0	0
	Bar owner	1	1	0	0	0
	Tela house	5	3	2	0	0
Hire day labourer	Traditional healer	1	0	1	0	0
Farmer	Agriculture	0	0	0	2	2
	Shop owner	0	0	0	1	1
Total		8	5	3	3	3

source: M de Jongh data Koraro (2015)

Following on from Sen's argument, households that are not able to produce food (non-farm households) and/or households that are not able to produce enough food quantities (farm households) are dependent on their employment endowments to support their household's livelihood. The endowments of both farm and non-farm female-headed households are related to *self-employment opportunities*³⁸ which are closely tied to agricultural production as available wage-labour in Koraro is scarce. However, like agricultural households, non-farm households are also economically dependent on the harvest season to meet their financial needs. Self-employment opportunities are dependent on the household's basket of economic assets which includes the ability to acquire productive assets and the capability to adapt other capital assets into economic resources. The adaption of capital assets into economic resources and the social norms that shape the economic participation of women in the community is explored in detail in chapter seven. Lastly, the exchange conditions of Sen's food entitlements argument are affected by environmental hazards and the physical infrastructure connecting households to market-spaces in Koraro and in the surrounding areas; Megab, Hawzen, Wukoro and Senkata markets. Market spaces are an important community asset for intra-community and inter-community exchanges, and transportation infrastructure is essential for households to reach other markets, particularly the Senkata

³⁸ Self-employment is defined by the Government as anyone who generates an income outside of wage-employment.

and Wukro grain markets for the eastern Tigray region. The negative environmental impacts on the exchange conditions in market spaces reduce household income and purchasing power in Koraro and in other areas in Tigray. The reduction of availability of food increases the price of food both locally and in the surrounding areas as food becomes regionally scarcer. The grain price hike impacts both household food security and the economic capabilities of self-employed households particularly those that purchase high quantities of grain post the harvest season for re-sell in the local market throughout the year. At the end of 2015, FEWS NET projected that Trigrayan³⁹ households would not meet their minimum nutritional needs from January through to March 2016 in the following year due to the drought. Household grain stockpiles will sharply decline accompanied by a decrease in household labour income and the cost of staple foods will increase (FEWS NET, 2015:2). Another key driver impacting household food security is higher food prices due to rising-inflation, in 2011 food inflation was thirty-nine percent (39%), three times the sub-Saharan African average of thirteen percent (13%). The IMF reported in 2015 that the 'overall vulnerability to food price shocks has increased almost tenfold, despite stepping up government's policy efforts' (IMF, 2015:5). Although, the World Bank (2015a) reported that the higher food prices 'ensured high returns to investment in agricultural production' for many rural households connected to markets. However, high food prices have detrimental impacts on poor households, particularly non-agricultural households that are dependent on unskilled wage labour (ibid). Although, eight female-headed household participants are categorised as agricultural households, due to the nature of the sharecropping schemes (except for one participant), female-holders do not reap the benefits of higher food prices, as they still need to purchase food from local markets. Conversely, the findings suggest that female-holders are reluctant to capitalise on higher food prices because of their social obligations to provide food for the household and the restrictions over the amount of grain they are entitled to sell. This is addressed in greater detail in the following chapters six and seven. The persistent threat of environmental and economic shocks contributes to how women perceive the future risks thus, shaping how they manage their grain to sell in market spaces. Below, is an excerpt from Mullu explaining how she manages her grain stock furthermore, her quote provides insight to the value of grain over cash for women:

³⁹ As well in other agricultural zones of Eastern Amhara, Central and Eastern Oromia, and Rift valley areas of SNNPR.

‘One of the reason why we are selling in much lower quantities other than the social rules is that we are thinking of the future. I have ten quintals⁴⁰(1 ton) for the year, six quintals (600kg) is sufficient for the year and I can sell the 4 quintals (400kg), but I am selling in smaller bags because I am still afraid of what comes next. So apart from the selling taboos, we are responsible for the household’s food. Even now, I am thinking of 10 months in the future, we don’t want to risk our family so that is why we are selling it lower quantities. We only sell when we need cash for household products’ – Mullu.

The ecological threats to the food security of female-headed households and to the exchange conditions of Koraro’s market spaces have been established. The following section will examine the resilience of female-headed households to the threats through the close examination of the coping strategies used by women to sustain the external shocks.

5.3 Food insecurity and household coping strategies

Vulnerability as a symptom of poverty as argued by Prowse (2003) is pertinent to how households can mobilise their resources to sustain shocks. There are numerous coping strategies women exploit to endure the prolonged hungry seasons. The strategies can be divided into two categories; overall-household and intra-household. The overall-household strategies are characterised by the following: switching to cheaper cereals from *white-teff* to *red-teff*, wheat and maize; reducing consumption of meat, vegetables and sugar; consume grain stock savings; borrow food from a friend and/or relative; apply for a micro-credit loan; and, sell off livestock and other productive assets. However, switching to cheaper cereals increases their prices as traders anticipate an increase in demand and retain their stock holdings. In June 2008, the average price of maize increased by two-hundred and twenty-five percent (225%)⁴¹ from the previous year June 2007 (WFP, 2008:3). In the 2013 Ethiopian Rural Socioeconomic Survey, rising food-prices were reported as the most detrimental economic shock to the household, followed by, increase costs in agricultural inputs, illness and death of a household member, and droughts (CSA, 2013). The participants reported that when they receive additional income during the hungry season, they stock-up on cheaper grains, vegetables, coffee, sugar and popcorn. Furthermore, they identified consumption

⁴⁰ One quintal equals 100kg.

⁴¹ An increase from 176.20 ETB to 550.70 ETB, an increase of 102.7% from January that year (WFP, 2008:3).

items such as; coffee, sugar, popcorn, meat, and some vegetables as luxury foods. Although coffee, sugar and popcorn are considered luxury items, they are important food items as they are integral to the *coffee-ceremony* and religious celebrations which are fundamental socio-cultural rituals that strengthen social bonds between households – particularly between women. Accumulating community social capital stock is an essential capital asset to sustain the livelihoods of female-headed households. Furthermore, other important non-food items central to religious celebrations and to the daily coffee-ceremony is grass and incense which women purchase in the markets. Below is a quote from Letaiy describing the coffee ceremony and social capital:

‘There is a special thing in Ethiopian community when women drinking coffee together’ – Letaiy.

The Tigray Government⁴² classifies food insecure households according to food consumption and diversity as; poor, borderline, and acceptable or good. Poor households will consume cheap cereals and oil daily, and sugar three-times per week, these households are extremely food-insecure. Borderline households consume cheap cereals, oil and sugar daily, other cereal types at least twice a week, and vegetables at least once a week. Acceptable or good households consume cheap cereals, oils and sugar daily, other cereals and pulses at least five times a week, potatoes and vegetables twice a week, and meat and fish at least once a week (WFP, 2009:35). The livelihood-groups that were classified as food-poor were petty-traders, waged agricultural labourers and households receiving assistance from food-aid programmes, inter-household borrowing and begging. Unsurprising, female-headed households were identified as more food insecure than male-headed households, following that, marital status was another contributing variable with divorced and separated households being the most food insecure followed by widowed households. Furthermore, food insecurity interconnect with household asset holdings, households identified as poor to medium assets were found to be food poor and borderline (ibid). The vulnerability of female-headed households to food insecurity is embedded in the socio-cultural practices that shape the household and community entitlements of women, these cultural norms are investigated in more detail in chapter six.

Intra-household coping strategies are characterised by the individual consumption needs and distribution patterns of the household’s food. Individual consumption needs embody

⁴² World Food Programme VAM analysis method.

aspects of age and gender which make intra-household distribution patterns unequal. The source, frequency and quality of meals provides insight into intra-household gendered coping strategies which adapt and substitute food stocks to sustain shocks. These coping strategies include; reducing meal frequency, reducing meal portion size, nutrition substitution and abstaining from eating. At intra-household level the coping strategies are not indicative to any order, however, women were using one-to-two intra-household strategies along with one overall-household strategy in the same week to cope with the extended hungry season. Some of the findings in Koraro align with the World Food Programme's research on food insecurity and vulnerability in Tigray (WFP, 2009), indicating that the measures used by women in Koraro are indicative to the region. The WFP report's main findings were; eating less expensive foods (meal substitution) which aligns with the findings of the overall-household coping strategies above, reduce the number of meals in a day (reduced meal frequency) and limiting the portion size of daily meals (reducing meal portions), these are both explored below. The WFP report assumes that the coping strategies utilised are equal except for parents prioritising the needs of their children, this finding did not go beyond a generalised notion that parents will abstain from eating to feed their children. However, a more complex picture emerged when the participants described the consumption needs of their individual children in relation to their age and gender. Households will reduce the frequency of their meals from three to one meal per day. At the time of this study, only two participants were not utilising this coping strategy, below are excerpts from Eddel, Hanna and Astar:

'In the hungry season, we are eating once a day, we are hungry throughout the day, but now it is to bad' – Eddel.

'A food scarcity is a lot; I miss about two meals a day when it happens' – Hanna.

'Food scarcity happens frequently, my children need to eat, we miss many meals in the day' – Astar.

Households will reduce their meal portion sizes however, the reduction is not equal, male members' meal portions are two-to-three times larger than female members. Nutrition substitution is a coping mechanism which substitutes hunger for malnourishment. The most common method used is to add excess water to the meal while it is cooking to increase overall food quantity, this is referred to as *food-water* by the participants. Although there is a limit to the amount of water that can be added to the meal, the excess water reduces the overall (limited) nutritional content of the meal. Women and young girls' servings are

considerably smaller than male household members. This increases the risk of female household members to health deprivation, below Mullu describes the distribution patterns of *food-water* within her household:

‘In times when food is less like in this time, I increase the quantity of the water. Everyone have to taste but the quantity is different; two cups of food-water for my son, half cup of food-water for me and my daughters. I keep extra for my sons’ – Mullu traditional midwife.

The second most common method is to increase consumption levels of locally foraged and/or purchased wild foods to substitute the cheaper (already substituted) staple foods. Although, participants consume wild foods within their diets, cacti fruits *opuntia ficus-indica* (*prickly pear*) locally known as *beles*⁴³ are the predominant source. The consumption patterns of *beles* have increased, becoming an important food source in Tigray during times of drought and famine (Mulu, 2015). This finding aligns with Maxwell, *et al*’s., (2010) research on food consumption patterns in Tsaeda Amba Eastern Tigray during hungry months, however, cacti fruits are also vulnerable to drought and pests:

‘Consumption of wild food (mainly beles or prickly pears from cactus) is significantly up. The drought and an insect infestation in 2009 limited the availability of beles, the prickly pear from cactus that grows throughout Tsaeda Amba. This fruit becomes available as early as June in many parts of the Woreda and constitutes a significant part of food intake during the rainy (hungry) season’ (Maxwell, *et al.*, 2010:13).

Photograph 24: Cactus plant growth in region



⁴³ ‘The fruits of *O. ficus-indica* contain water (92%), carbohydrates (4-6%), protein (1-2%), minerals (1%) and a moderate amount of vitamins, mainly A and C.

When the *beles fruit* become scarce households will consume the flat stem (cladode) of the cactus. Two of the participants they were increasing their household's consumption of *beles* to manage their grain stock as they feared that the drought will extend into the following year 2016. Finally, female household members will abstain from eating meals in order to feed male household members, below is a quote from Astar on meal abstaining:

'I feed the boys instead of the girls when there is a food shortage' – Astar.

The gendering of food coping strategies makes young girls and women more vulnerable to nutrition and health deprivation, this aligns with the work of Kabeer (1994) and Kent and MacRae (2010). Unequal intra-household food distribution patterns that command female altruism and self-sacrifice makes female household members more vulnerable to nutrition deprivation. However, in female-headed households, women are less at risk to domestic violence associated with food insecurity. Four of the divorced participants said they regularly experienced physical abuse from their husbands in times of food insecurity, food was a constant source of conflict. Below is an excerpt from Zodu describing intra-household conflict over food with her ex-husband:

'Food scarcity causes conflict if there isn't enough food, mens feel inferior when they have not eaten - my ex-husband used to hit me and it does happen often to other womens' – Zodu.

Contrary to the work of Buvinić and Gupta (1997), Chant and Craske (2003) and Chant (2007) in Koraro during the hungry season and in other times of food insecurity, female-headed households are not more egalitarian compared to male-headed households.

'in female-headed households, more resources are usually allocated to food, health and education, particularly that of daughters... levels of nutritional and educational attainment may thus be higher among children in female-headed units, and less gender differentiated' (cited in Chant and McLlwaine, 2009:251).

The findings of the above section suggest that irrespective of household headship female household members are more vulnerable to nutrition and health deprivation. Women and young girls experience the annual hungry season (and other food-insecure times) differently from male household members through the unequal intra-household coping strategies. The findings suggest that there is a feminisation of vulnerability to nutrition and health deprivation during times of food insecurity. This provides insight into Koraro's overarching social structure and the reproduction of gender social norms in female-headed households.

5.4 Household interdependency and livelihoods

Following on from the above section, food insecurity provides insight into the economic and social interdependence of a community (Sen, 1999:162). Women exploit their interdependent relationships as a livelihood strategy making social capital an essential first and second-generation asset. All the participants said they loan each other grain and other resources, reciprocity is a socio-cultural practice shared by all women especially during times of need. This aligns with the work of Molyneux (2002) in times of economic crisis women act as shock-absorbers through their roles in the reproductive economy. The Tigray Government categorises households that borrow grain or other food stocks as fundamentally food poor (WFP, 2009). Although these findings suggest high levels of community interdependency particularly between female-headed households, women are not a homogenous group, household interdependency is dependent on established reciprocal social networks and the ability to draw-down on social capital stock. All participants said that they consider inter-household reciprocity when managing their food stocks. Below are excerpts from Mullu, Abeba and Hanna describing the importance of inter-household dependency:

‘Sometimes, some households and some families they face lack of grain during the cold times. For you its your level of connection, if she is my loving neighbour and she doesn’t have grain I will borrow her some grain, because her house should not stay empty during the year. And, next year she will give me back. We have a local scale we measure the bag, so she will return the same amount, probably that same bag to me. We do an informal deal, which we all agree’ – Mullu.

‘The closeness in the community is important for survival, it is not only in money, lending powder, food, seeds, oils, sugar, coffee. I think to these things when I saving my stuffs, the neighbours do same, even if it is small’ – Abeba.

‘I lend from the neighbourhood, or go to by brother or sister to lend food, I will pay it back’ – Hanna.

The two participants who did not self-identify as being food insecure reported that the current environmental shock was depleting their household’s food stocks. Their increased erosion rates were linked to loaning higher amounts of grain for a longer period to their neighbours. All the participants expressed that the well-being of their neighbour was essential to the well-being of their household. Aligning with Bessell’s (2010) argument that individual autonomy is reduced by kinship obligations, although, Bessell’s writings refer to reduced autonomy over household income as a critique of the poverty line’s assumptions on income distribution patterns. Here, the findings suggest inter-household obligations –

community interdependency – may reduce individual household autonomy over food stock and other household assets. Conversely, the interdependent relationship between female-headed households is strengthened through the absence of support from responsible kin. Divorced participants reported that they did not receive food, financial or care assistance for their children from their ex-spouses, and widowed participants reported that they did not receive support for their children from their deceased spouse's family. All the participants said that this is common practice in Tigray, and it is the responsibility of women to meet the basic needs of their children, this included assuming the traditional responsibilities of men suggesting there is evidence for the feminisation of responsibility as argued by Brydon (2010) and Chant (2007). Although, their arguments are positioned within male-headed households and this research examines female-headed households, in all the studies women have had no choice but to assume the traditional household responsibilities of men such as providing clothing for their children, paying for their education needs (school fees and learning materials), and paying for their shelter and health care. Furthermore, female-headed households are reliant on each other for child care, photograph 25 is of one of the participants with two of her young children, she was looking after the other two children in the photograph while her neighbour was away in Mekele. Photograph 26 is of another participant with her two sons and her neighbour's daughter who assists her in the household, both participants are solely responsible for providing for their children and rely upon their neighbours' support and assistance.

Photograph 25: Koraro participant one



Photograph 26: Koraro participant two



5.5 Accumulating social capital

Community relations and building social capital stock is essential for female-headed households to meet their basic, reproductive and productive needs in Koraro's fragile landscape. The findings align with Molyneux (2002) that women in low-income groups foster the strongest bonds by establishing vast social networks and engaging in reciprocal relations. The socialisation of food insecurity and shared household responsibility suggests there is a feminisation of responsibility between households, therefore, the well-being of Koraro disproportionately falls to the women of the community. This increases the overall vulnerability of female-headed households as a demographic group, and as individual households. Below are quotes from Mariem, Mimi, Astar:

'If the community is in poverty, then I am in poverty' – Mariem

'Community, it is everything you can not live without the community - you have a social life, share things, if you are sick they will look after you' – Mimi.

'I ask for food from my neighbours and I will return it back, I too lend her food and she will return it back' – Astar.

The findings suggest that the accumulation of social capital between households is dependent on a myriad of interdependent variables shaping the level of access and type of social capital available to individual households. Well established households are defined as households with residency between seven to ten years, these women foster stronger intra-community bonds, as such, they also have better access to resources through stronger relationships with the Kebele representatives. Whereas, newly formed households are households that have been established within five years. Connected to length of residency of female-headed households is Koraro's developing nuclear village and the feminised inward migration trends⁴⁴; particularly divorced women with dependents from surrounding areas – rural to rural and urban to rural migration. Below Jalene describes the length of time it takes for women to be socialised into the community and the feminised demographics which Tekle and Abeba concur. However, Abeba's excerpt reveals that women are also in competition with each other and with the men in the community over scarce resources provided by the Kebele:

‘...in Koraro it takes 5 years to socialise the people around here into the society. There more women who live here than men, and most of the women around here are divorce women with childrens. That is why they are living here, they have moved away from their birthplace...’ – Jalene.

‘...most women around here are divorced with childrens...’ – Tekle.

‘Most of the women are divorced in this village, and they want to make money of their own ... we are all the same, we are trying to get things [land, seeds, food-aid, micro-credit] from the Kebele’ – Abeba.

The 2007 population census records the number of female migrants to be higher than male migrants in both urban and rural areas (CSA, 2007). Feminised migration trends can be attributed to the transient lives of women embedded in patrilocal customs, forced migration on dissolution of the marriage contract, ostracism from their native village for bringing shame to the family, economic migration, and Ethiopia's border conflicts. The socio-cultural practices that construct the transient lives of women is examined in chapter six with respect to the institution of marriage. Another variable associated with migration into Koraro is the

⁴⁴ ‘A person is considered as a migrant if he/she was born in another rural area or town which is different from the current Woreda or town of enumeration. Similarly, in urban areas of enumeration a person is considered as a migrant, if he/she was born in another town or any rural part of the country’ (CSA, 2007:265).

existing social relations with established women in the community. Social networks between women transcend the physical boundaries of their resident communities through kin relations and membership of various civil society associations, the most common are; traditional funeral and economic groups, and community health, environmental, agricultural volunteer groups. *Idir* is a traditional funeral co-operative which provides support for members of the community when a family or household member passes away. The support includes a variety of variables from financial to labour, food and other resources to assist the household with the associated funeral costs. There are different types of *idir* groups within a community, the structure of an *idir* association intersects with gender, household composition and economic status, not all community members are a part of the same *idir*, but, customary all community members should be a part of an *idir*. Only a few of the participants were members of an *idir* in Koraro and two of the participants held memberships in the natal village, below Konjit reflects on the importance of social capital and *idir*:

‘I define the community as very good, in daily activity you communicate, in happiness, in funeral time it makes you feel better when you have trouble things they can help you. I define community as an advantage to be in one’ – Konjit.

Traditional economic savings co-operatives *equbs* are generally formed between peoples who are a part of the same or similar economic groups⁴⁵ securing its members access to financial capital through the association, although, it is predominantly practised in urban areas. However, not everyone within the same livelihood group has access to an *equb*, these are autonomous groups. *Equbs* are built on social trust and relations between its members governed by an agreed set of rules with a nominated chairperson and treasurer, membership is based on several variables specific to a group. However, the participants expressed two basic requirements for membership: an individual must have a relationship with an *equb* member who will act as a guarantor of the person’s character and trustworthiness; and, the individual must be capable to pay the monthly instalments. *Equbs* are not restricted by location, they can span across areas, two of the participants were a part of *equbs* in different villages, below Jalene explains the structure of two *equbs* in Koraro, Saba describes the *equb* she is a member of for tela sellers from different villages:

⁴⁵ Hotel owners, taxi drivers, merchants, and so on.

‘...we started last year with equb, there is only 2 groups of equb, there is 12 of us and we are a mixed group...’ – Jalene.

‘I am apart of equb for tela sellers, we pay per week 100 birr [\$4.74 US], 23 people from different places around here’ – Saba.

‘...I am a part of an equb in my birthplace’... – Ayana.

All members of an *equb* equally contribute an agreed amount of money per week or month into a group savings mechanism, and at the end of each month, one person within the group will be given all the group’s monies. However, the monies are not placed in a bank account and the treasurer is responsible for the group’s savings. The pay-out system is structured around a monthly rotation whereby every member will have access to the group savings at the end of their nominated month. The rotation cycle is therefore dependent on the size of the group, the larger the group the longer the rotation but the higher the pay-out, the smaller the group the shorter the rotation and smaller the pay-out. Furthermore, *equbs* assist their members to accumulate other social and financial capital with the Kebele by increasing their likelihood to secure micro-finance loans. There are various types of community volunteer groups women are members of, these groups also extend beyond the boundaries of Koraro, there is a selection of government-run volunteer groups which focus on health, education, agricultural and economic development programmes. Below is an excerpt from a government official describing how the local government exploits women social networks to improve the development capabilities of a community. Yehudit and Mullu are volunteer programme leaders and before Yehudit moved to Koraro she was volunteering in villages along the border with Eritrea in conflict hot-spots:

‘The green project, there are 4 groups within the women’s section which is part of the community development programmes who are working with the health activity, the education activity, and agricultural activity’ – government official.

‘I am one of the 5 members of the leadership in this community. I am the chair women of the women’s association, I did a course in HIV/Aids and family planning. The main course is how to handle women in the society. I was on the border of Ethiopia and Eritrea and I observed the terrorists in Ethiopia. That’s the time I took the course with women from different villages, I visited the villages where terrorists are in to help the women’ – Yehudit.

‘I am a chairwoman of 30 households. I collect donations and distribute them to the households. I protect them, if a women became pregnant, I give them advice to go to the clinic. I give them advise women to control her money’ – Saba.

Another variable that shapes the accumulation of social capital is the proximity of households from each other, although, Koraro is a small village, the clustering of households in different parts of the village influences inter-household bonds in these micro-areas. This was observed when women described who their neighbours were and how they assist each other with water and wood-fuel collection, washing clothes, wild-foods foraging, child-care, and sharing household's physical assets, as seen above in the photograph 13 with the outdoor stoves. Abeba describes this phenomenon below:

'Some days my close neighbour we are going to the market and fetching water and going to the ceremony together' – Abeba.

Age was another factor influencing the accumulation of social capital, women of similar ages fostered stronger bonds with each other. However, older women can establish stronger relationships with the Kebele members, age intersects with community social status giving older women more agency. Social relations with the Kebele is explored in community entitlements in chapter six. The above section has examined how women accumulate their social capital and the interdependency between female-headed households in Koraro.

5.6 Food insecurity, government policies and livelihoods

Following on from the above examination of female-headed households' coping strategies to sustain external shocks, this section will examine the role of the Productivity Safety-Net Programme (PSNP) and distribution of food aid by the Kebele. At a macro-regional level, the ability to alleviate the impacts of widespread drought and growing food insecurity is dependent on government macro-economic policies and international food-aid intervention programmes. Hawzen Woreda is ear-marked by the regional government as a chronic food-insecure region, whereby the Woreda falls under the Productivity Safety-Net Programme (PSNP). The PSNP was established in 2005, targeting the rural poor who face chronic food insecurity to resist shocks, create assets and become food self-sufficient. The programme addresses chronic food insecurity through providing transfers of cash, food, or both, primarily during the hungry seasons through public work initiatives. Able-bodied households participating in the programme provide their labour in exchange for cash or food or both, non-able-bodied households participating in the programme receive direct support from the government (Devereux, *et al.*, 2006; Holmes and Jones, 2011; WFP, 2012; IMF, 2015; Berhane, *et al.*, 2017). Non-able households are defined as inability to work due to;

‘pregnancy/lactation⁴⁶, disability, illness or old age’ (Holmes and Jones, 2011:8). In 2015 the programme’s cereal transfer was fifteen kilograms (15 kg) per household member per month or the cash equivalent, however, from 2016 the transfer was set to include an additional four kilograms of pulses per household member per month to increase nutritional and calorie intake (Stephen and Farmer, 2015). The public works initiatives focus on infrastructure development; expanding rural roads, community infrastructure, building schools and clinics, and rehabilitating land and water resources (WPF, 2012). The programme provides a platform for the international donor community, in 2015 the programme entered its fourth round (PSNP 4).

Holmes and Jones (2011) found in their research across Ethiopia that although the PSNP has a strong focus on female-headed households, the programme assumes that all households have a surplus of available labour to participate in the programme. Female-headed households are on average smaller than male-headed households and have a shortage of labour to participate in public works. Therefore, on average male-headed households are over-represented in the public works programme, with older and female-headed households receiving more direct support from the programme (ibid). In Tigray, women represent forty-six percent (46%) of the programme’s participants as stated by the World Bank (2008 cited in Holmes and Jones, 2011). Five female-headed household participants were contributing in the programme, three of which engage in public-works, two in road construction and one in agriculture, and two who receive direct support.

‘The overarching principle of the Productive Safety Net Programme is to facilitate a gradual shift away from a system dominated by emergency humanitarian aid⁴⁷ to productive safety net system resources via multi-year framework’ (Government of Ethiopia, 2004, p. 4 cited in (Devereux *et al.*, 2006:1).

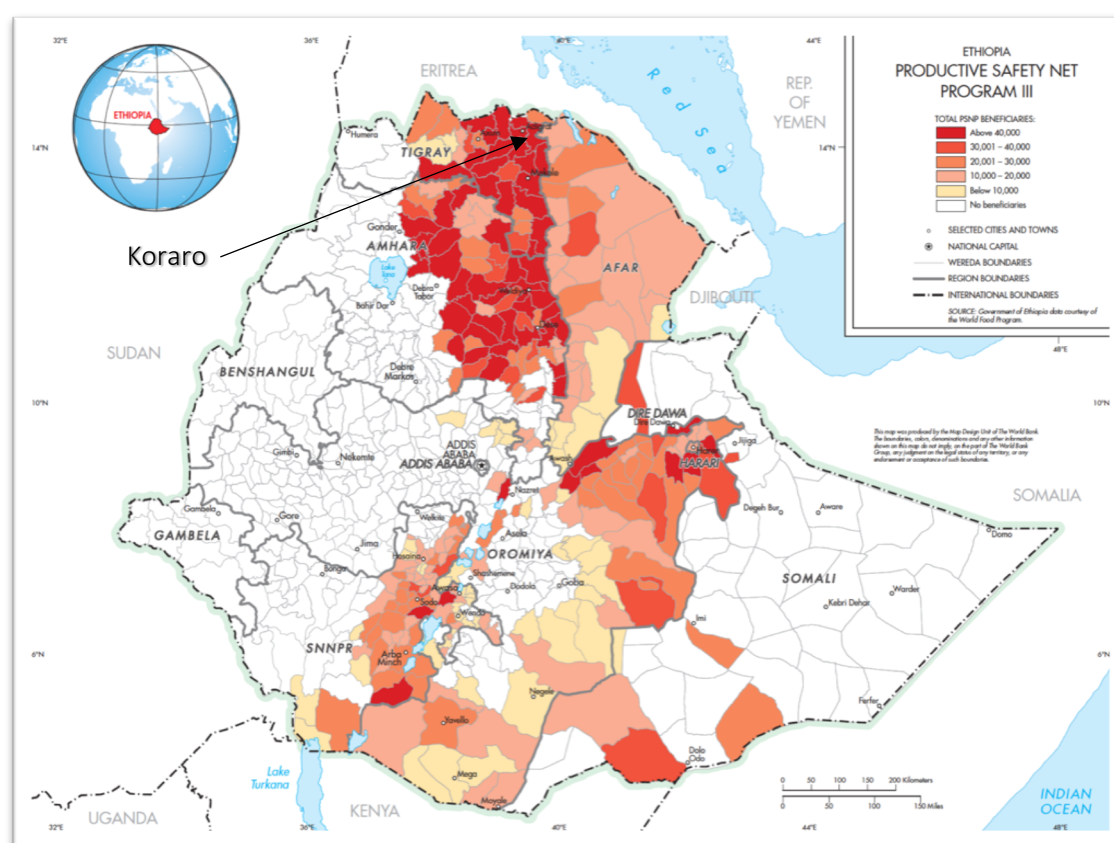
The incorporation of women into the public-works programme is at the intersection of the gender division of labour, chapter seven examines how women engaged in the programme are disenfranchised. The PSNP provides vulnerable households with up to six months of assistance per year and extends its support for additional three months for households

⁴⁶ From ‘January 2016, women are exempt from public works from the time of their first antenatal care visit (or their fourth month of pregnancy, whichever is earlier) through the first year postpartum, and will be encouraged to participate in community-based nutrition activities organized under the Health Extension Program’ (Stephen and Farmer, 2015:12).

⁴⁷ ‘Ethiopia had an emergency appeal for humanitarian assistance every year since the famine of 1984’ (World Bank, 2011:vii).

under its 'Risk Financing Mechanism during periods when food insecure people are affected by unpredicted shocks' (WFP, 2012:1). The six months' support is tabulated as either five days' public works per month or a cap of twenty-five days over six months (Stephen and Farmer, 2015). In 2015 the programme⁴⁸ was targeting 'more than eight-million beneficiaries (nine-percent of total population), primarily in famine-prone areas and is critical for poverty reduction for the most vulnerable households' (IMF, 2015:8). In a study conducted by the ODI (2016), they found no evidence that the programme decreases chronic or acute undernutrition in children from participating households, however, the ODI cannot definitively conclude as to why this has occurred (Berhane, *et al.*, 2017).

Figure 13: Productive Safety Net Programme map



source: (World Bank, 2009b:153)

The decentralisation model of the programme requires the Woredas to allocate 'beneficiary numbers among their Kebeles, and the Kebele task forces then allocate numbers to communities' (Overseas Development Institute, 2006:viii). However, the Kebele's selection

⁴⁸ The PSNP is the second largest protection program in Africa (IMF, 2015:8).

process is not determined by a selection criterion set-out by regional and federal governments, individual Kebeles structure their own selection criteria. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) found that the selection process could be a combination of multiple variables such as; 'previous years' food aid receipts, current harvest assessments, relative population estimates, and in some cases direct needs assessments' (ODI, 2006:viii). Although, when examining the availability and access to the aid programmes with the participants a far more complex picture emerged. The participants expressed that the aid they received was not enough to meet their needs, they still needed to generate additional income to sustain their livelihoods for the months of the year they did not receive support. Further, the participants involved in the programme said that they use the programme as a recovery mechanism rather than a coping mechanism. By the time a household has access to the programme they have exhausted all their coping strategies, and they need to replenish their eroded capital stock. The household selection process in Koraro is dependent on a myriad of variables which constructs the physical and social value of the household; household asset portfolio including household ownership, household structure, available household labour, age, gender and marital status of household head, and the type of relationship the household has with the Kebele members. The most important variable is the household's relationship with the Kebele, below Abeba describes her involvement with the agriculture work for food programme. Abeba's quote highlights the privileging of agricultural households and the focus of the government to support agricultural production, non-farm households are, therefore, at a disadvantage:

'I was in the Kebele earlier and I received some oil. There is a place where you register. But, you have to be a farmer, if you don't work in the farmland the government doesn't give you donations. The Kebele has researched the financial status of the community, and they help the most needy, helps them with skills for agriculture, the donation is vegetable oil and 30-kilogram wheat grain' – Abeba.

Below is an excerpt from Dinha describing how she has requested access to the Work For Food Programme and has been denied by the Kebele because she owns cattle in her native village:

'There is a lot of donations things but we are not like yet receiving them; grain and oil - but I don't have it yet because I don't work in the community. I asked the community leader to work, but he has not respond. I have an ox and cow in my birthplace and the leaders say I can't have grain and oil' – Dinha.

Participants receiving direct support from the programme are not free from costs, households are required to pay administration fees each time they receive aid. Below is an excerpt from Konjit, a sixty-eight-year-old widow who suffers from poor health and has no able bodies in her household to participate in the Work For Food Programme, she is one of the participants who receives direct support from the Kebele:

‘You see, I am not feeling well, so the society knows that I am not working with the community, so the government gives me a special case, because I am not participating because of my health. I receive grain and oil from the government in aid and I get peas they deliver it to my house. I have to be signed up to the programme to receive aid, I have to pay 2 birr and sign for the stuffs’ – Konjit.

However, from January 2016 households categorised as no-abled bodied (disability, illness or old age) will receive all year-round support as opposed to six months annual support (Stephen and Farmer, 2015). The findings suggest that there are high levels of nepotism within the community, and at lower levels of government administration. Some of the participants expressed feelings of deep mistrust with the Kebele, claiming that they do not distribute the food aid they receive from NGOs. Below is an excerpt from Naomi expressing her concerns about the distribution of food aid by the Kebele:

‘We heard the Red Cross gave the Kebele some seeds, but they keep it to feed themselves and their friends. The red cross has some special things to help us if you can work’ – Naomi.

5.7 Micro-credit

Applying for a micro-credit loan is a common livelihood strategy that is utilised as both a recovery mechanism for households unable to access PSNP support or aid and for households to start a small home enterprise. Women who have stronger assets portfolios including social capital with the Kebele and a member of an *equb* have better access to micro-finance. In Tigray micro-credit loans are provided through Dedebit Credit & Savings Institution S.C (DECSI), but, administered through the Kebele. The recovery strategies of the household include accessing financial support to receive health-care treatment, recover lost household assets that were sold, replace domestic livestock that has died, and replenish exhausted food stocks. The findings suggest that women do not distinguish between reproductive and productive micro-finance, the accumulation of financial capital is adapted to meet the basic needs of the household. However, many of the participants who had

received micro-credit loans are not able to repay the loan, the ability to repay the loan is dependent on the capabilities of women to accumulate income through their participation in the informal economy. Three of the participants had been arrested by the Kebele and held in jail until they were able to repay the loan, two borrowed the money from their social network and one borrowed the money from her family. For women who do not have access to a social network, they will have to sell off their assets to raise money to repay the Kebele. Below Yohanna states that she used the loan to replenish food stock, Zeyane also used the money for food stock and to invest in her small home enterprise. Eddel describes her loan in more detail, she used the money to purchase livestock and the spread of water-borne diseases killed all off her livestock, unable to repay the loan the Kebele arrested her and held her in jail until she was able to come up with the money. Eddel's excerpt highlights how micro-credit loans also increase women's risk and exacerbate their overall vulnerability:

'I got 2,200 birr [\$104.32 USD] micro finance loan, I used it to buy food stocks, my house's food was finished' – Yohanna.

'I borrowed from the Tabia [Kebele], I borrowed 2,000 birr [\$94.83 USD] and repaid 2,500 birr [\$118.54 USD]. I used the money to buy food for my house and to sell, I started to make crafts' – Zenaye.

'I loaned money from the workers association 2,000 birr [\$94.83 USD] and I need repay 2,500 birr [\$118.54 USD]. It is a part of the Kebele. I was arrested because I could not repay the money. I was in jail for 2 days and one of my family members gave me the money to repay the workers association 2,500 birr [\$118.54 USD], now I owe 2,500 birr [\$118.54 USD]. I used it to buy goats, and goats died from a disease. Their stomach became fat and then they pooped out blood water I lost 10 of them. I don't know the source of the disease but in some houses this disease is common, some of them loss up to 15 goats – Eddel.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter explored how Koraro's ecological landscape shapes the vulnerability of women to poverty, and the coping strategies of female-headed households to sustain the external shocks. The chapter found that Koraro's poor capital asset portfolio impacts the capabilities of women to meet the basic needs of their households. Further, the fragility of the environment increases both the burdens of women's reproductive labour and the risks to their health and personal security. There is an asymmetrical relationship between the

dependency on Koraro's available resources and the vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty.

The chapter found that household nutrition quality is incrementally substituted throughout the duration of the annual hungry season, bodily nourishment is substituted to circumvent bodily hunger. Further, the chapter found that the well-being of female household members is at greater risk during the hungry season as the nutritional needs of male household members are prioritised as an intra-household coping strategy. Therefore, suggesting that during times of food insecurity there is a feminisation of vulnerability to nutrition and health deprivation. The ability of women to sustain shocks is dependent on their intra-community relationships making social capital an important capital asset, female-headed households access their essential household resources through their social networks. This suggests that social capital is an essential first-generation asset for rural female-headed households to meet their basic needs. The capabilities of women to access social capital stock is dependent on a myriad of variables indicating that female-headed households are not a homogenous group and that some households are more vulnerable than others. The chapter found evidence for the feminisation of responsibility, female-headed households who do not receive support for their children from responsible kin assume these traditional obligations of men. Further, household food security along with other basic needs are socialised phenomena between the women of Koraro who promote a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the community.

Finally, the chapter examined the macrosocial institutional arrangements of the regional government to address food insecurity in Koraro and found that access to PSNP support and aid is dependent on the social capital with the Kebele members. The chapter suggests that some female-headed households distrust the Kebele, and that nepotism is widely practised between Kebele members. Further, applying for a micro-finance loan as a household recovery strategy is the most common practice for households that are unable to access institutional support and aid. Most of the women struggle to repay the loan which exasperates their overall vulnerability to deprivation as many of the women are arrested and have their assets seized.

The following chapter six will explore why women and girls are more vulnerable to Koraro's ecological landscape through the close examination of the socio-cultural practices that construct their gendered entitlements and obligations. The chapter addresses the social

norms that shape the gender division of labour and the social construction of the feminine, and how this impacts the capabilities of women to sustain the livelihoods of their households.

Chapter Six: Household and Community Entitlements

6 Introduction

The previous chapter explored how Koraro's ecological landscape shapes the vulnerability of women to poverty, and the coping strategies of female-headed households to sustain the external shocks. The aim of this chapter is to examine why women are more vulnerable to Koraro's fragile ecology by scrutinising the socio-cultural practices that shape the allocation of entitlements and obligations within the household and community. This is addressed by close examination of the ascribed rights and responsibilities of Ethiopian women with respect to the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community entitlements. Further, the chapter examines how the ascription of rights and obligations shape Ethiopian women's sense of agency and well-being, and additionally, how these inform the livelihood strategies of women who head their own households. This is explored through the life experiences of thirty-six women, three men, and relevant secondary data from the documentary analysis.

The chapter is arranged into two parts; the first part examines how the institution of marriage shapes the life-cycle of rural Ethiopians informing the rights and responsibilities of women with respect to family and kinship. The institution of marriage begins with the formation of new agricultural households and the gender division of labour. This section explores how the gender division of labour reproduces gender roles and relations in the household informing the female social identity. The following section addresses the microsocial arrangements of the marriage contract: the pre-nuptial negotiations; intergenerational asset transfer; aspects of the marriage ceremony; and patrilocal customs. This section reveals the exclusion of mothers from the pre-nuptial negotiations and how the above socio-cultural customs shape the future capabilities of girls. The following section marriageability examines the age of marriage which is composed of several elements: legal age and traditional practice; the age disparity with husbands; the loss of education and the effects on personal and future well-being. The section explores the socio-cultural practices that structure the behaviour of girls and women to be good wives, and the social transition of girls through motherhood to become adult community members. The institution of marriage concludes with the dissolution of the marriage contract, this section examines the legal and traditional practice, the effects of patrilocal customs when couples divorce, and the risks of women to be ostracised from their natal village for being a divorcee.

The second part of this chapter; female-headed households and community entitlements, examines how women navigate traditions and values, in order to secure and maintain access to community entitlements. Female-headed households exist within a patriarchal community and their livelihoods are shaped by their social relations with the Kebele and other community members. This section explores the strategies of women to accumulate access to essential *first-generation* assets which is composed of several elements: legal and traditional arrangements; access to shelter through informal rental agreements; and land for subsistence agricultural production. Subsistence farming examines how the gender division of labour restricts the farming capabilities of women, and the sharecropping arrangements they have with local farmers. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and contributions of this chapter to the feminisation of poverty thesis.

6.1 The institution of marriage

The institution of marriage shapes the life cycle of Ethiopians, the social status of women and men are defined by the institution extending to individuals as young as ten-years-old. The official status categories are separated accordingly; never married, currently married, cohabiting, separated, divorced and widowed (CSA, 2013;2015). The cultural assumption is that most of the population will get married at least once in their lives. The institution of marriage is structured through harmonising and conflicting arrangements of other social institutions in specific places over time, viz., family and kinship, community, civil society, markets and the state. The complex arrangements of these institutions shape women's agency, entitlements and obligations within the institution of marriage through the pre-nuptial negotiations, the marriage contract and ceremony, marital disputes and resolutions, annulments, dissolution of the marriage contract, and the rights of widows. For example, a harmonising arrangement is the union of two families strengthening household and community social capital. Whereas, a conflicting arrangement is the continued practice of underage marriage despite the State setting the legal age of marriage at eighteen-years-old. Socially, the custom guarantees (amongst other things) a young girls' virtue between the negotiating families. Marriage extends intimate family ties codifying relationships that are generally '*gender-ascriptive*: to be a husband, a wife, brother or daughter, is to be male or female' (Kabeer, 2003:50). The status of women in the institution of marriage shapes their agency and entitlements in other social institutions. Married women are endowed a higher social status and have greater access to resources than unmarried women. Marriage is the

socio-cultural structure that produces and reproduces gender roles and relations constructing social norms of femininity and masculinity in rural areas. The duality of the institution of marriage perhaps makes it one of the most important microsocial institutions in Ethiopia.

In rural Tigray, households are customarily formed through the institution of marriage which generally comprise of nuclear family structures whereby housing extended family members indefinitely is not common practice (Egziabher and Tegegne, 1996; Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; Rogg, 2008). However, in central and southern regions of Ethiopia 'trans-generational continuity of households' housing up to three familial generations where household membership is determined through kinship is more common (Rogg, 2008:4). Marriage in rural Ethiopia is not only the union between two people, it is also the formation of new agricultural 'production units' (Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2005b:347). Fafchamps and Quisumbing's (2005b) 'production units', is an apt categorisation which provides insight into the structure of agrarian households. The findings align with the above scholars suggesting that agrarian households are an institutionalised space that embodies the rules and norms of both the household and economy. The space simultaneously reproduces intra-household and community gender ascriptive roles and relations informing women's agency and ownership over their labour and productive assets. The gender division of labour ascribes women's roles predominately within familial-work and men's roles within agricultural production, farming is perceived to be a masculine task. Although Ethiopian women partially engage in agricultural production by weeding the fields and harvesting, their contributions are perceived as aiding during times of high labour needs, as opposed to being recognised as active farmers. Agricultural households are, therefore, the same space that simultaneously structures both women's domestic and productive labour. Below are two excerpts, the first is from Lema, a sixty-five-year-old male participant describing the division of labour in agricultural households, and the second is from Michael stating his wife's agricultural role:

'Every activity that is performed has gender, there is husband's tasks, it is, mostly outside tasks that is the husband's tasks. Engaging in the farming activities most of the time. The women also has the tasks which is given for her, most of the time it is domestic tasks around the homestead. But, the women's has certain farming tasks, when its harvest time or weeding time, you see, the wives help the husbands to do the farming' – Lema.

'My wife helps me on the farm and to pick up stuff on the land' – Michael.

Following on from Lema's and Michael's excerpts, photograph 27 is of a middle-income Hawzen wordea homestead, the homestead is a combination of structures separating the domestic home from productive structures, the granary, animal pens and equipment storage.

Photograph 27: Homestead one



The below pre-harvest photographs portray the agricultural gender division of labour, photograph 28 displays the women weeding the fields while the man ploughs the fields with his two oxen, and a young boy in background minding the calf. Photograph 29 is of a farmer ploughing the fields with three young children in the background, one boy and two girls.

Photograph 28: Pre-harvest production



Photograph 29: Farmer ploughing

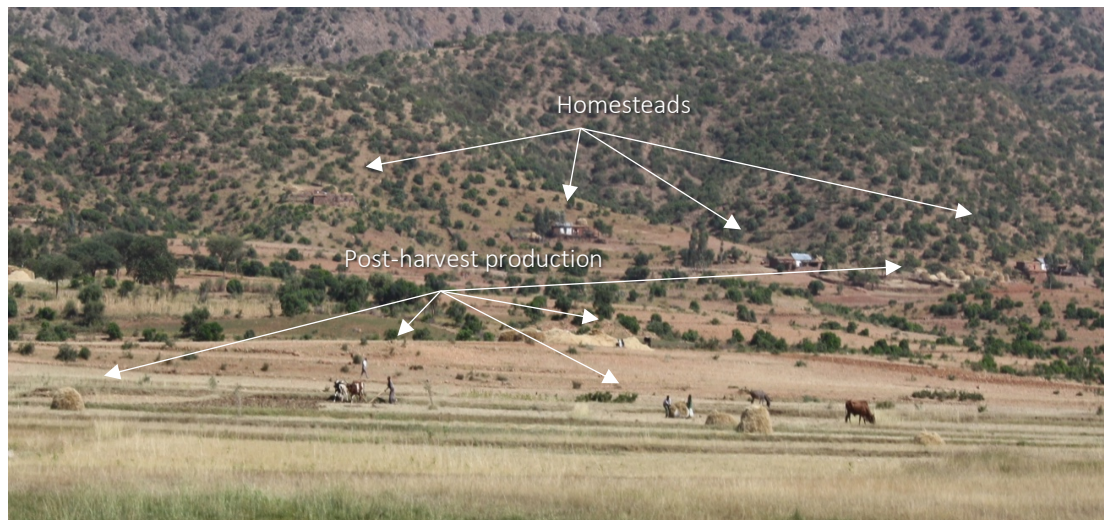


Photograph 30 is a closeup of a hired worker ploughing Lema's field, it is common for elderly farmers to hire labour to plough the fields. The following two photograph 31 and photograph 32 were taken during the post-harvest season, both photographs portray men and women working together in post-harvest production. The harvest and post-harvest seasons are labour intensive, and all household members are needed to assist at this stage of agricultural production. All the photographs are of typical farming scenes across Ethiopia, men ploughing the fields and women aiding their husbands, brothers, fathers or sons. It is, a cultural taboo for women and girls to plough the field and sow the seeds, these are productive tasks that inform the masculine social identity.

Photograph 30: Ploughing close-up



Photograph 31: Post-harvest production one



Photograph 32: Post-harvest production two



The division of labour influences how women can accumulate, adapt and utilise their productive assets, including the type of economic opportunities available to women. The formation of agricultural production units through the institution of marriage affirms the gender division of labour. This impacts the economic capabilities of female-headed households in Koraro. The gender division of labour provides insight into women's and men's roles and responsibilities revealing how the wider society perceives their 'capabilities and hence constructs gender difference and inequality' Kabeer (2003:50). The findings support Kabeer's argument, the participants' narratives reflect how women's domestic and

productive work is not valued as men's work by the wider community. Mullu's excerpt below describes the gender division of labour and the perception of women's familial work by men:

'In rural communities the labour division is very important, our main livelihood resource is the farming, and the men are farming, they are only farming. But farming is a seasonal thing, during the other time the mens entertain, he goes to his friend's house, or to the urban centre, or to the tela house [traditional alcohol]. We womens work all year round, like caring for the baby, making injera, making coffee, cleaning.

In some case, when the husband comes to the house he will ask; what have you been doing in all this time? Domestic task is not considered a work for the men. The mans will ask, what do you do all day? But I am cleaning, making injera, making coffee, caring for the baby, fetching water. Imagine a situation when he comes like 5 p.m. in the afternoon and I am cooking, he will say; what have you been doing the whole day? It is based on his interest you see, domestic work they don't consider that as work' – Mullu traditional midwife.

Chapter five examined how Koraro's fragile environment increases the burdens of women's reproductive labour and impacts on their social well-being. The following photograph 33, photograph 34, photograph 35 and photograph 36 below are of women performing various reproductive tasks. Photograph 33 is of women washing their household's clothes and bedding together in the flowing stream.

Photograph 33: Women washing clothes together



Photograph 34 is of a grandmother washing her grandson using a small water jug to clean the little boy. Photograph 35 is of two images, the image to the left is of an elderly woman carrying a large amount of fuel-wood on her back, she is crouched over from the weight of the load. The image to the right is of two women carrying twenty-five-litre jerry cans of water on their backs.

Photograph 34: Grandmother washing her grandson



Photograph 35: Women undertaking reproductive labour



Photograph 36 is of a woman with a large amount of fuelwood and branches on her back while purchasing a grass-broom from another woman. These are typical observations across the regions in Ethiopia.

Photograph 36: Women collecting fuelwood



The division of labour creates binary gender identities in Koraro, thus supporting Day's (2001) argument that femininity is produced through the 'negotiation with and polarisation of masculine gender identities' (109-110). Men who engage in work which is culturally ascribed to be *women's-work* are subjected to gendered social opprobrium challenging their masculinity, which negatively impacts their community social status. The emasculation which is embodied in women's work seems to be universal in Ethiopian culture. All the participants⁴⁹ said; men who undertake women's work are not perceived as men, regardless if the participant personally ascribes to this gender norm or not. Below are excerpts from Alemi and Tkaw describing how boys and men are emasculated by the wider community for carrying-out women's-work:

'If the man does household work the society thinks that is bad, the men and the women would say to him that he is a sissy [effeminate]' – Alemi.

⁴⁹ This all includes participants interviewed throughout this study.

‘My son has an older brother and I told him that his father was a chef and he must learn how to cook and help me when I am doing things. I taught him how to cook, wash his clothes and how to look after himself. But then this friends at school insult him, the men and the women call him a sissi’ – Tkaw.

The ascribed superiority of men’s social status provides insight into how households reproduce gender norms that go unchallenged, and unequal labour and social outcomes. Chapter five explored this social phenomenon through the privileging of male household members nutritional needs during food insecure times. The gender division of labour begins early in agricultural areas; children are socialised into their gender roles from a young age. The reproductive and productive value of children’s labour is essential to sustaining agricultural production units’ livelihoods. However, there is a marked difference between the labour provided between girls and boys. Typically, young girls assist their mothers with; cooking (baking injera), preparing coffee for the coffee-ceremony, making tela, washing clothes, cleaning the house, caring for younger siblings, foraging for wild foods, and, collecting water and firewood. Girls are involved with food preparation from a young age and their close association with food production gives them a deeper understanding of food insecurity which reproduces altruistic norms. Chapter five explored food abstinence as a coping strategy, below Astar continues to explain how the gender division of labour informs that coping strategy:

‘...most of the time it’s the boys who are complaining if they don’t have something to eat compared to the girls if they don’t like fill-up their stomach the boys feel like they are inferior [weak]. The girls are more aware when there is food shortage, they help their mammas with the cooking, they don’t complain...’ – Astar.

Young boys assist their fathers with herding the livestock and all farming needs. The gender division of children’s labour permits boys with more time for play and school work. It was common to see young boys playing in the streets or in Koraro’s market space, while most of the young girls were busy assisting their mother or other women with reproductive work. It was observed that young boys have a greater sense of entitlement to public space than young girls, and when young girls try to engage with the space they are met with a degree of hostility from young boys. Unaware to the team, on several different occasions two young girls tried to approach us but were chased away by the young boys following us around. When we were made aware of this, we told the boys that they would not be able to interact with us if they were to do it again. When the young girls apprehensively approached, they

informed us that the boys would chase them away with sticks, throw rocks at them telling them to go home. When we asked the boys why they behaved that way, they told us because the girls are not allowed to be there and that they should be at home. These observations align with the work of Johnsson-Latham (2010) boys are entitled to greater material advantages such as food, and non-material advantages too, such as the 'right to play and have fun' (41). Johnsson-Latham found that this is central to 'developing boys' self-confidence and perception of superior rights' (ibid). Following-on children's labour responsibilities intersect with age, with the younger siblings undertaking more time-consuming tasks, for example, the youngest daughter is responsible for preparing the coffee and looking after the small children. The oldest daughter is responsible for ensuring her younger female siblings are doing their household jobs. Similarly, the oldest son is responsible for ensuring his younger male siblings are doing their farming jobs. Below, is a continuation of Lema's description of the division of labour and its inclusion of children:

'...and also the childrens have their own tasks based on his age. If he is thirteen he is to helping keeping cattles, also the daughters have her tasks, she can perform domestic activities, like her mamma only have small time to herself' – Lema.

The previous chapter touched on the domestic responsibilities of young of girls highlighting the risks the environment presents to their health, safety and overall well-being, the following photograph 37 to photograph 42 below are typical of the gender division of children's labour which is common throughout the regions in Ethiopia. Photograph 37 portrays imagery of two different scenes of young girls carrying-out their reproductive tasks the girls are aged between four and seven years old. In the image to the left the girl is using a large stick and bowl to pound the grain into flour for her mother or older sister to make injera, in the image to the right the young girl is alone carrying the fuelwood she has collected on her back. Photograph 38 is of a participant's niece, she is aiding her aunt with domestic work, her work consists of cleaning the house, and assisting her aunt with preparing injera and tela.

Photograph 37: Young girls undertaking reproductive work one



Photograph 38: Young girl engaging in domestic work



Chapter five examined the impacts of Koraro's vulnerable locale and poorly developed infrastructure on young girls physical and social well-being. Young girls need to walk further to collect and carry the household's water and fuel, reducing the amount of time they can allocate to their schoolwork and for their personal leisure. Further, young girls' risk to physical and sexual assault increases, all the participants with daughters expressed their concerns for their daughters' safety when they are outside of the household. This is a

contributing factor in shaping the social mobility of young girls and their social mobility when they are older. Apart from the trauma young girls endure from the assault, they lose their virtue which is their key asset in the pre-nuptial negotiations. Photograph 39 is two images of young girls taking clothes to be washed in the stream, the image to the left is of an eight-year-old girl on her way to the stream, and the image to the right is of two girls on their way to the stream to aid their mothers, both are caring for their younger siblings. Like women, young girls will try carry-out their domestic work in pairs or in small groups or join other women to improve their safety. Two of the participants were raped when they were between the ages of seven and ten years old while collecting water:

‘Now days it is safer for girls; in the passed generation it was not safe for girls to collect water. They were get hurt and raped by men. And other harmful behaviour towards girls. This is all through education – Shishay’.

‘I was 7 years old I was raped by a boy and he was 18, when I was collect water – Taci’.

Photograph 39: Young girls undertaking reproductive work two



It is, not uncommon for young boys to help their mothers with domestic work until they are about ten-years-old in the absence of a younger sister or another female household member. However, from a relatively young age, boys cease to contribute to the household’s reproductive work. Below Hereg describes her sons’ behaviour towards domestic work:

‘My first child (male) made coffee; but, my second child was a girl so my first child stopped, and my fourth child a boy does not even fetch the waters because there are girls in the house. Even if the coffee is over boiling my sons will not touch it, they call the girl. To even take injera from the container they wont’ – Hereg.

Photograph 40 is of Lema’s two girls aiding their mother with the coffee ceremony, this image represents how age intersects with girl’s labour, the older daughter is sweeping the mud floor with a grass broom and the younger sister is grinding the coffee beans, while their mother prepares the water in the coffee pots. This is a photograph of a middle-income homestead, the image is of the kitchen there is an indoor injera stove which is classified to be a modern stove compared with the outdoor clay stove in photograph 13 in chapter five, another stove which is used to prepare the coals and cook with pots. Three siblings sleep in this room on the bed, there is one small window above the stove and a door to enter the kitchen, the air quality in the room is very poor due to the lack of ventilation which adversely impacts the health of the mother and daughters while cooking and sleeping. Photograph 41 is of one of Lema’s sons herding the homestead’s cattle and photograph 42 is of a young boy minding the livestock while they are out to pasture.

Photograph 40: Girls aiding their mother



Photograph 41: Young boy herding the cattle



Photograph 42: Young boy minding the livestock



6.2 The marriage contract

Following on from the formation of new agricultural households, marriage is the union between families of similar wealth and religious orientation (Mengesha *et al.*, 1996) interconnecting community social status, productive assets, and reproductive labour between families. It is, through the institution of marriage that newly-formed households acquire access to *first-generation assets* through the negotiated marriage contract between

both spouses' natal households. The marriage contract is an instrument through which intergenerational asset wealth is transferred from the parent's household to the children's household. The marriage contract legitimises women's access to resources and elevates their community social status. These findings align with the work of other scholars Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2005b); Jackson (2007); (Doss *et al.*, 2008) on women's access to assets and improved social status through marriage in sub-Saharan Africa.

The rights of men ascribe them the power-over the pre-nuptial negotiations that go unchallenged and accepted as the social norm. This institutionalised power removes the agency of women from the marriage contract negotiations – this is a representation of Kabeer's (2005) power-over argument. The negotiations take place between the households' most senior male members. Traditionally, the bride's family gifts the groom's family with an ox or a cow, or a cow and a calf – essentially a dowry. The groom's family pay the bride-price to compensate for the loss of female labour within the household. In widowed female-headed households in Koraro the negotiation falls to the most senior male relative, this could be the widow's father, the eldest adult son, or an uncle. However, young girls are further disadvantaged as their elder male relatives (particularly brothers) may structure the negotiations to ensure that their share of asset inheritance is not affected through their sister's marriage. Amit an eighteen-year-old participant living with her mother described how her uncle on her mother's side would be responsible for negotiating her marriage contract. She went on to explain that her uncle controls her mother's share of the land they inherited from their parents and that her mother encourages her to save her money in a bank account in her own name, to ensure her ownership over her resources.

‘My mom farms the land with her brother, he is one in control of their land. My mom supports me to keep my money in the bank’ – Amit.

The transference of responsibility and authority to another male relative is common in rural households, this phenomenon extends beyond the negotiation of the marriage contract to other institutional arrangements, for example, the buying and selling of agricultural resources and products. This reveals how the agency of women is dependent on male kin to access institutional arrangements that are traditionally masculine. However, in divorced female-headed households, the absent father retains the right to negotiate the terms of the marriage contract for his children. The retention of this right provides insight into the wider socio-cultural norms which aligns with Chant's (2007) argument for the feminisation of poverty that there is an increasing disarticulation between household 'investment and

responsibilities and rewards and rights' (336). Although Chant's argument is positioned within urban male-headed households, the finding suggests that the socio-cultural privileges and authority of fathers extend to female-headed households despite father's absconding from their responsibilities to contribute towards the livelihoods of their children. Chapter five explored how this phenomenon gives rise to the feminisation of responsibility between female-headed households. Further, the negotiation of the marriage contract is a multilayer transfer of assets from one household to the next with female-headed households bearing the *transaction costs*. The father's household acquires social and material assets through the transaction, whereas the maternal household's human capital is eroded through the loss of labour thus, increasing the household's vulnerability to external shocks. Therefore, mothers can only hope their households will be adequately compensated for the loss of labour. Further, arranged marriages can be extremely traumatic for the bride and the mother, regardless of household headship, this is explored in the following sections. As a coping strategy, women draw down on their social capital with other female-headed households to recover from the labour shock in exchange for other household resources. This was observed in Abeba's house; her ex-husband had arranged a marriage for her daughter. To compensate for the loss of labour, Abeba had negotiated with her sister for her niece (Mariam) to assist her with both reproductive and productive work (selling tela) in exchange for grain. However, through this exchange, Mariam's time for schoolwork and leisure is significantly reduced as she is undertaking domestic work within two households.

Below is an excerpt from Mimi describing how her ex-husband does not provide any support for her child and wants to arrange a marriage for her daughter. Mimi's excerpt eloquently describes the power dynamics embodied in the relationship between her ex-husband and herself, to which she feels she is unable to challenge. Furthermore, the quote highlights the tensions between State legislation in the revised Family Code 2000, and the lack of enforcement by the Kebele. The legislation stipulates that her husband is required to contribute to their child's livelihood to which he does not comply and is not held accountable by the Kebele:

My ex-husband lives in another village and he doesn't support me or the child, the government does have laws to make him pay money to me, but he doesn't. But suddenly he is asking to see the child, he wants to arrange a marriage for my daughter with his friend's son. I don't want such things but I can not refuse him. It is, a common things for the mans to do' – Mimi.

Customary brides bring less productive assets and more portable reproductive assets into the marriage compared to the groom. Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2005b) found in their research⁵⁰ in Ethiopia that on average the groom ‘brings nearly ten times more assets to the marriage than the bride, an average value of four-thousand-two-hundred and seventy (4,270)⁵¹ Ethiopian birr compared to four-hundred and thirty (430) birr for brides (353). Kumar and Quisumbing (2012) found in their research that the value of assets inherited by husbands is almost five times that of wives, ‘at nine-hundred-and-forty-one point ninety-eight birr (941.98) compared to one-hundred-and-seventy-eight point sixty birr (178.60)’ (2481). This is embedded in gendered social inequalities, whereby, men are prioritised in intergenerational asset transfers and inheritance from their parents, particularly in land and oxen. Therefore, from the onset of marriage, intra-household productive asset ownership is unequal, whereby, men’s ownership over productive assets is legitimised through the negotiated terms of the marriage contract. This points to another tension between the revised Family Code 2000⁵² which stipulates equal asset ownership within the institution of marriage, and the microsocial arrangements which prioritise male ownership over land and oxen. Further, this is a representation of a conflicting institutional arrangement between the State, the family and kinship, and the community. The masculinising of asset ownership is strengthened through other gender marriageable institutional customs such as; patrilocality, and age and education disparity. This aligns with Chant’s (2007) examination of how ‘wealth’ and its ‘associated prerogatives and privileges’ may be masculinising where on ‘paper gender gaps appear to be narrowing (115). The argument permits for the contextualisation of wealth and privileges, in the context of this research it includes essential capital assets and hard currency. In Tigray, on paper, women are entitled to equal asset ownership within the marriage contract, however, customary this is not practised and is not challenged. Further, the capabilities of women to challenge this unequal arrangement is dependent on

⁵⁰ Fafchamps and Quisumbing’s (2002;2005a;2005b) and Fafchamps, Kebede, and Quisumbing (2009) findings based on the data collected in the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS). ‘The first three rounds occurred in 1993–95. They were undertaken in collaboration between the Department of Economics of Addis Ababa University (AAU) and the Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) of Oxford University. The fourth round was in 1997 and resulted from a collaboration between AAU, CSAE and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The ERHS covers approximately 1,500 households in 15 villages across Ethiopia’ (Fafchamps, *et al.*, 2009:574).

⁵¹ Calculated on 1997 price index (Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2005b).

⁵² Family code 2000 revision ‘matrimonial property shall be shared ownership and that the husband must consult with the wife in dealing with these, previous practice was that the head of the household would deal with property on behalf of the wife’

their education attainment and knowledge of how to challenge this cultural practice within their kin group. This has future implications for women's access and ownership of *first-generation assets* on the dissolution of the marriage contract. Chapter five found the common intra-household asset portfolios of women to reflect their reproductive roles within the household and community. Culturally, brides are gifted with more portable assets than productive or fixed assets, such as; cooking utensils, small livestock, grain, consumer durables, jewellery and clothes. These gifts are intended to aid women with their domestic work reaffirming their ascribed roles within the household and are associated with patrilocal customs reflecting the transient role of women within the institution of marriage. However, many women adapt their portable assets portfolios into economic assets by providing them with some degree of agency over their labour in ways that do not unsettle their gender roles. This was observed by women who sold baked injera, cooked food produce, dairy products, honey and traditional alcohol (tela) in and around Koraro, the adaption of household asset portfolios into economic resources is explored in the following chapter seven.

The gifting of assets to the couple extends beyond the family to include members of the community. The marriage ceremony is a symbolic social practice incorporating members of the wider community strengthening community bonds and building reciprocal social capital stock. This represents a harmonising arrangement of social institutions structured into the institution of marriage; the role of the community, kinship, church and markets. There is a social expectation within the community to be included in the marriage ceremony, however, the marriage ceremony itself is also a public display of social status within the community. Below Mullu describes the symbolic importance of the marriage ceremony within the community:

'There is reciprocity that occurs when people bring gifts, these gifts are usually in-kind or in cash, which is a part of the traditional ceremony. Nowadays, the weddings are becoming more expensive is because they are inviting every person in the community to show their status, so the amount of oxen that need to be slaughtered has increased, at least three to four' – Mullu traditional midwife.

This socio-cultural practice aligns with Moore's (2010) argument that intangible symbolic assets that embody 'respect, influence and authority' are vitally important, and 'often link households and individual household members to the wider community (36). The social value of gifting the new couple is intangible, a symbolic gesture of respect which strengthens social capital. The previous chapter identified social capital to be an essential *first-generation*

asset, building reciprocal community relationships is imperative for the livelihoods of households in fragile environments, below is an excerpt from Mullu, describing the importance of community social capital collectively:

‘The social bond is the most important aspect of the rural community’ – Mullu traditional midwife.

The marriage ceremony is informed by various customs, one of the most important customs is the *bedding ceremony*⁵³. The bedding ceremony publicly confirms the virginity of the young bride. A bride’s virginity embodies the virtuous ideals of the feminine and her family’s honour for first-time marriages. Although the bride price is intended to compensate the bride’s family for the loss of her labour, it is a payment for the young bride’s virtue. The ceremony provides insight into the ownership over the body of the bride, a young girl is perceived to be the property of her father which he transfers to the bridegroom and his family. The ritual involves various actors who legitimise the social value of the young bride, below Mullu⁵⁴ describes in detail the social value of the bedding ritual:

‘The marriage day they will have sex, but before sex we prepare a white scarf to place under the woman and after penetration she will bleed out onto the scarf. After sex, the best man will take the scarf and display it to the bride’s family. The next day the bride’s family will hold a feast, and they will call the family of groom to show the scarf. The father will reward her. It’s a declaration of family pride. After all, the bride price is valueless if she is not a virgin, because he is purchasing her virginity. The dad represented her as a good girl to the community, however, if it was declared that she was not a virgin, the father was shamed by the elders of the community’ – Mullu.

If the young bride is deemed not to be a virgin by the bridegroom and best man, the bride will be returned to her family and the bride price must be repaid in full. This is a non-negotiable social custom enforced by the community elders. The repercussions lead to intra-household conflict, parents may divorce, and the young girl will be ostracised from her father’s household as a strategy to regain their honour. Mullu continues to describe the consequences:

⁵³ This is my term I have ascribed to this social custom.

⁵⁴ Mullu’s eldest son will be responsible for performing the father’s role for her youngest daughter’s pre-nuptial negotiations and wedding ceremony.

‘There was a case some years ago of the woman was sent back, the family said she was not a virgin. Her father sent her away, she was completely ostracised. She married another person from a different community, however, her family and her are still not speaking – Mullu traditional midwife.

Further, this intra-household conflict provides insight into the social *responsibility-chain*, the community holds the father responsible, the father holds the mother responsible, and the mother holds the eldest daughter responsible. The findings suggest that female household members are responsible for the social reproduction of socio-cultural customs, Mullu continues below:

‘The father is ultimately responsible for the daughter, for the society the father is responsible, as the father engages in the wedding negotiations. But the father will say to the mother – you are ultimately responsible. Couples will divorce over this issue. The social structure goes; the community will ask the father and the father asks the mother. The mother will blame the eldest daughter, why are you not a good role model for your sister. Ultimately, the father will always blame the mother, because is responsible for socialising her within the correct custom’ – Mullu.

Patrilocality is widely practised in rural Ethiopia, the custom is an inter-household transfer of labour from the bride’s household to the groom’s household. The social practice contributes to the transient entitlements of girls and women in rural areas, this is reflected in the portable assets they accumulate. Aligning with Kabeer’s (2014) notion of the *stranger bride*, on the dissolution of the marriage contract women are required to migrate out of the conjugal household, eroding their access to housing and land acquired through the marriage contract. Fafchamps & Quisumbing (2005b) found in their research that men have a greater claim over land and housing because their share of land brought into the marriage is more significant. Another contributing factor to a larger share of land is the groom’s parents’ relationship with the Kebele, their social capital permits them better access to lobby Kebele members for larger and better land holdings on behalf of their sons. All the divorced participants no longer had a claim to the land and housing they had access to whilst married. Further, this highlights that the entitlements men are fixed compared to the entitlements of women, Dinha reflects below on how she had to leave the conjugal household:

‘When I want to leave my husband, I have no choice because I am living in his house and I have to leave and find a rented house, I left with only my childrens and a few small-small things, so I choose to come to Koraro’ – Dinha.

6.3 Marriageability

The revised Family Code 2000⁵⁵ sets the legal age of marriage at eighteen-years-old, however in special cases, there is an exception of two years, and both parties need to consent to the union. Consent represents agency and choice; nine participants highlighted that they had chosen their spouses regardless if the marriage was harmonious or not. The findings suggest that the capability to choose intersected with the participant's age and education. Customary, during the times of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930 – 1974), a girl's age was the most important factor prior to marriage. Young girls were sent to live with the bridegroom's family between the ages of seven-to-nine-years-old and married at the onset of puberty (Mengesha, *et al.*, 1996). Although this custom is no longer common in Tigray, it is still implicitly practised, the marriage is informally pre-arranged when a girl is around seven-to-nine years-old, at the onset of puberty she will migrate to the bridegroom's village with the marriage taking place when she is eighteen-years-old. This custom is a legitimate form of early marriage as the union will only take place when the girl comes of legal age. The young girl is still however at risk, she is isolated from her kin, removed from school to undertake domestic work in her future husband's household. Further, she is also at a higher risk of physical, emotional and sexual assault. If a family refuses to accept an informal pre-arranged proposal from a potential bridegroom's family, the bridegroom's family will utilise their social capital to lobby influential community members to advocate their proposal on their behalf until the family agrees to the union. Alternatively, the bridegroom's family may abduct the young girl to force the family to agree to the union, this is usually accompanied by physical or sexual violence. Violating a girl's virtue makes it difficult for her family to arrange marriage for her with another family. However, this is not to say that all refused proposals result in marriage by abduction, and in some cases, a young couple may decide to use this as a strategy to ensure their union. This finding supports Jensen and Thornton's (2003) research, marriage through abduction and kidnapping is quite common across sub-Saharan Africa. Marriage by abduction is also a strategy used by men of limited assets who cannot afford to pay the bride price. However, households of lower socio-economic status could succumb to community pressure to agree to the union. Below is an excerpt from

⁵⁵ The Family Code has reformed some critical areas, such as the legal marriage age for a girl has been raised to 18 years; contract of marriage should be between the husband and wife and not between the families.

Gebru a thirty-three-year-old male participant expressing his objections to pre-arranging the marriage of his two-year-old daughter:

‘I have been asked by the society to give my daughter to other parent’s boy, I will not do it, although I am becoming the wealthy one from the arrangement. I just want to feel my daughter’s feelings in the coming years when she is ready to marry. One of my friends has proposed that my daughter marries his son. And, I said no, I want to respect my daughter’s feelings’ – Gebru.

According to the Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey (2017), the median age of first marriage for women in Ethiopia is seventeen-point-one years old (17.1) whereas the median age for men is twenty-three-point-eight (23.8). Fifty-eight percent (58%) of women are married prior to their eighteenth birthday compared to nine percent of men (ibid). Forty-seven percent (47%) of participants were married by eighteen years old eleven percent (11%) lower than the Ethiopian national average. Table 4 below, lists participants’ age at marriage, comparatively to other regions in Ethiopia early marriage for girls in Tigray is lower than the Ethiopian average, this is related to the reforms implemented by Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) during the Derg regime (1975 – 1987), prior to the reforms of the Family Code 2000. However, despite the positive trends in shifting marriage age-cohort rates for girls displayed in table 5 for regional figures based on the 1994 and 2007 population census (CSA, 1995;2007) early marriage is still common in rural areas. Two participants were married by fourteen-years-old, seven by fifteen-years-old, three by sixteen-years-old, four by seventeen-years-old, and nine were married between eighteen and twenty-four-years-old – of this only twenty-three percent (23%) are still married, sixty-eight percent (68%) are divorced, and nine percent (9%) are widowed, see Table 4 below. The findings align with a study done by Unicef (2018) across Ethiopia, although statistically a region may reflect lower early marriage rates for girls, locally within a Woreda or a Kebele the data reflects higher rates of early marriage. Although all the participants said that they would delay their daughter’s marriage, this does not necessarily mean that this would be the outcome. The above section addressed how the agency of women is removed from the marriage contract negotiations.

The participants’ age-disparity to their (ex)-spouse was between eight to twelve years, the younger the participant when married the larger the age disparity, see figure 14 for marriage age trends by sex for the Tigray region based on the 2007 population census (CSA, 2007). The age-disparity findings align with the work of other scholars Fafchamps and Quisumbing , Fafchamps, *et al.*, (2009), the average age-disparity between spouses in Ethiopia is ten years.

Conversely, there is a correlation between early marriage and education attainment levels of the bride's parents, the lower the education attainment of the parents the lower the age of marriage for girls. However, as anticipated, the participant's age at marriage had a direct impact on their education attainment levels. Participants who married early did not complete their schooling and had their first child within two years of marriage, they said were expected to respect their husbands and not question their actions. Further, the intersection of low education attainment and large age-disparity removes the ability of girls to negotiate control over their bodies, labour, and intra-household agency and power. Aligning with the work of Jensen & Thornton's (2003), the adversity of early marriage on the 'physical, mental and emotional development and well-being' of girls. The participant's early withdrawal from school, onset of early childbirth, and large age disparity with their (ex)-spouses contributed to their lower household and community entitlements (10). Early marriage prevents young girls from attending school, thus making them vulnerable to physical, emotional, psychological exploitation from the spouse and spouse's family.

Table 4: Koraro participant age at marriage

Koraro participants age at marriage	No. participants	Percentage
14 years	2	6%
15 years	7	21%
16 years	3	9%
17 years	4	12%
18 years	5	15%
19 years	4	12%
20 – 24 years	9	26%
Total married under 18 years	16	47%
Total married	34	100%
Number of participants divorced	23	68%
Number of participants widow	3	9%
Number of participants still married	8	23%

source: M de Jongh sample Koraro Tigray (2015)

The following collection of excerpts below are from various participants reflecting on the adversity of early marriage on girls. Firstly, Yehudit describes the importance of education on intra-household bargaining power and the social well-being of women:

‘If the women is literate and has had experience in education is quite different, she will control [negotiate] her husband well. Many women with small education will live in suffering [physical and psychological abuse] with their bad husbands’ – Yehudit.

All the participants said that sexual intercourse is a husband’s right, and the concept of marital rape does not exist in Ethiopia. This finding aligns with the work of Radcliff-Brown (1950), the marriage contract secures the husband’s rights to sexual access, removing women’s agency over their bodies (as cited in Moore, 1988:65). Further, the sexual rights of men extend to women’s reproductive rights, women who use contraception without the consent of their spouse to delay and control pregnancy leads to violence and divorce. Below Hanna and Gebru describe the rights of the husband:

‘It is, the husband’s right to have sex with me whenever he wants, even if I don’t want’ – Hanna.

‘Some of the people I saw, the husband and wife divorce because she is using the medicines, like birth control, the husbands don’t like it. The women are going to the Kebele to get the medicines and using it so they have not given birth yet and husbands find out and divorce them over such kind of things’ – Gebru.

Early marriage is the biggest hindrance for girls’ social well-being and equality in Koraro, Shishay, Lielit, and Yohanna reflect on under-age marriage and equality for girls:

‘Underage marriage is a problem, the girls and boys should not allow to get married if they are underage. The younger generation think differently from the older generation, in the past there was no education for girls, there was no perspective about the ability to give birth. The current generation is helpful by so many things like education, new technology, observing things from the internet, and becoming a more literate generation – Shishay.

‘Equal age when girls and boys get married. No underage marriage. To have equality is to avoid shyness, equal education, equal job opportunity, government must encourages us to have dignity’ – Yohanna.

‘To achieve a higher status in life you need to work hard and go to school. Education makes the difference’ – Lielit.

Below Gebru and Zahra reflect on social changes to early marriage, a positive outcome from policy reforms:

‘But, there is now days a good thing, a woman she’s starting to marry a man when she is 18, but when you compare with the past things it was too ridiculous she was too young, you cannot have a wife who is less than 18, she is not mature enough to have sex, it can hurt her physically, she can have a problem in such things’ – Gebru.

‘Future for my daughter is for her to graduate from school, from university. I will encourage my daughter to get married later in life about 25-26’ – Zahra.

Participants who were married between the ages of fourteen and fifteen recounted feelings of anguish, abandonment, vulnerability, emotional distress and loss of education. Biftu and Abeba discussed their experiences when they got married at fourteen and fifteen (both participants are divorced):

‘I didn’t get enough education in my lifetime, I engaged and married when I was a little kid and I wanted to learn but I didn’t get a chance. I was 14 when I got married and had my first child when I was 16. I forced to get married, my husband was 25. When I engage with him on the first time I didn’t know him. I was crying to Mother Marry to not let me get married and my mother was crying she didn’t want me to go, she didn’t want me suffering, she could do nothing my father did his own thing for his satisfaction’ – Biftu.

‘I got married when I was 15, it was an arranged marriage. I knew the person; he was almost 10 years older than me. His family had a relationship with my family. I didn’t want to marry him. I tried to refuse the engagement but my parents forced me. My family forced me to be his wife, and then I was suffering’ – Abeba.

Further, another variable that contributes to the poor education of girls is Koraro’s poor education infrastructure children must attend secondary school in either Megab or Hawzen, and girls are at great risk of being sexually assaulted or abducted. Apart from the personal trauma experienced sexual assault diminishes a girl’s virtue and the social value of her in future marriage negotiations, impacting her natal household. The reluctance to send daughters to school in another village places the overall social well-being of young girls at a great disadvantage which has detrimental impacts on their future well-being, Gebru explains the phenomenon:

‘But, in this society, there is a problem when girls are growing up and becoming around 7th or 8th grade [12 and 13 years old]. Their father’s or their parents not allow them to go far in the school because, when they become more successful in

their education stuffs, they are thinking that she can go out from the society and she can go renting in other places like Megab, Dugum, Hawzen, and they fear things in whether she will become pregnant and come back here. So the girls are not allowed to go there, so wont allow their daughters to go to others places to have school’ – Gebru.

The regional data indicates a positive shift in marriage age-cohorts for women. Although, how the census age cohorts are structured (15-19) it is not possible to know the exact number of under-age marriages in Ethiopia. Table 5 below represents the marriage population trends per age cohort in Tigray from the 1994 and 2007 population census. The data indicates there has been a reduction in marriages for females of reproductive ages fifteen to forty-nine-years-old (15-49), however, there has been a three percent (3%) increase in marriages for females aged ten to fourteen-years-old. This anomaly may be a result of poor data-sets from the 1990s. Further, another contributing variable to the large age disparity between spouses are the cultural norms that shape social ideals of masculinity, Mengesha, *et al.*, (1996) found in their research that men are seen to be:

‘...the guardian, the leader, the protector, and the head of the family; he is expected to guide and shelter his young wife...’ (113).

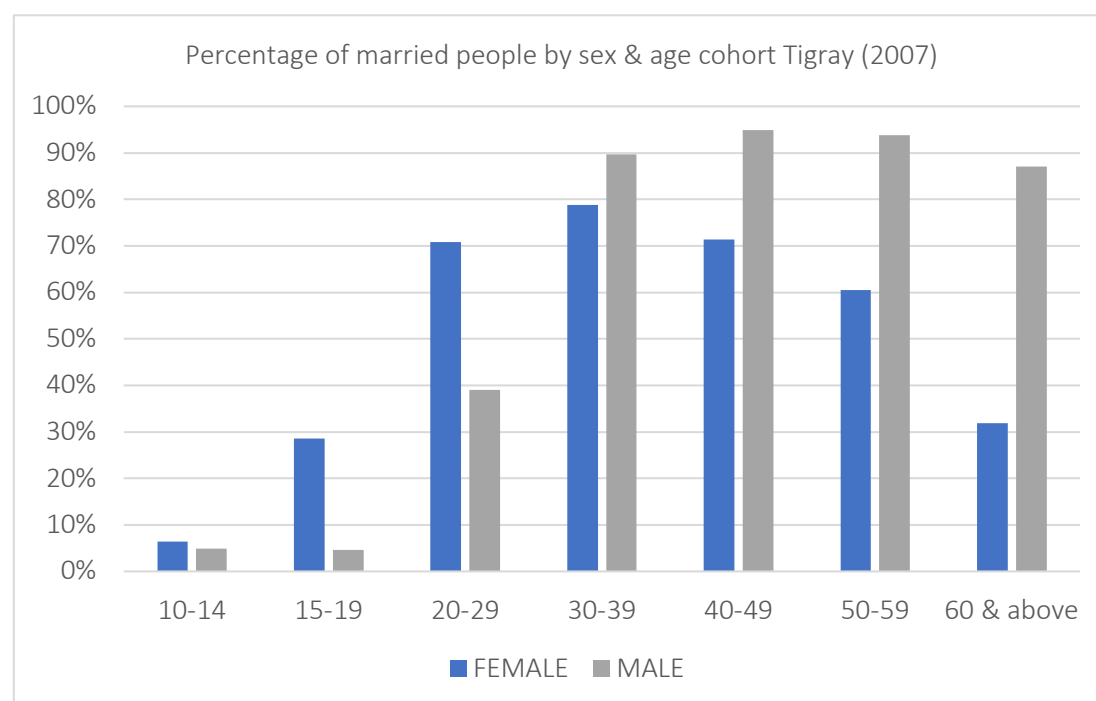
Table 5: Population marriage figures by age cohort

Age cohort	Male (1994)	Male (2007)	Female (1994)	Female (2007)
10-14	1%	5%	3%	6%
15-19	3%	5%	40%	25%
20-24	31%	19%	72%	59%
25-29	74%	57%	80%	75%
30-39	92%	86%	80%	75%
40-49	95%	93%	72%	67%
50-59	93%	93%	55%	57%
Above 60	85%	86%	25%	29%

source: M de Jongh adapted 1994 and 2007 census data (CSA, 1995;2007)

Figure 14 below represents the percentage of married people per age cohort in Tigray at the time of the 2007 Population Census⁵⁶: six percent (6%) of females aged between ten and fourteen-years-old (10-14) were married compared to five percent (5%) of males; twenty-nine percent (29%) of females aged between fifteen and nineteen-years-old (15-19) compared to five percent (5%) of males; seventy-one percent (71%) of females aged between twenty and twenty-nine-years-old (20-29) compared to thirty-nine percent (39%) of males; seventy-nine percent (79%) of females aged between thirty and thirty-nine-years-old (30-39) compared to ninety percent (90%) of males; seventy-one percent (71%) of females aged forty and forty-nine-years-old (40-49) compared to ninety-five (95%) percent of males; sixty-one percent (61%) of females aged between fifty and fifty-nine-years-old (50-59) compared to ninety-four (94%) percent of males; and, thirty-two percent (32%) of females aged sixty-years-old and above (60 +) compared to eighty-seven percent (87%) of males were married.

Figure 14: Marriage figures by sex and age

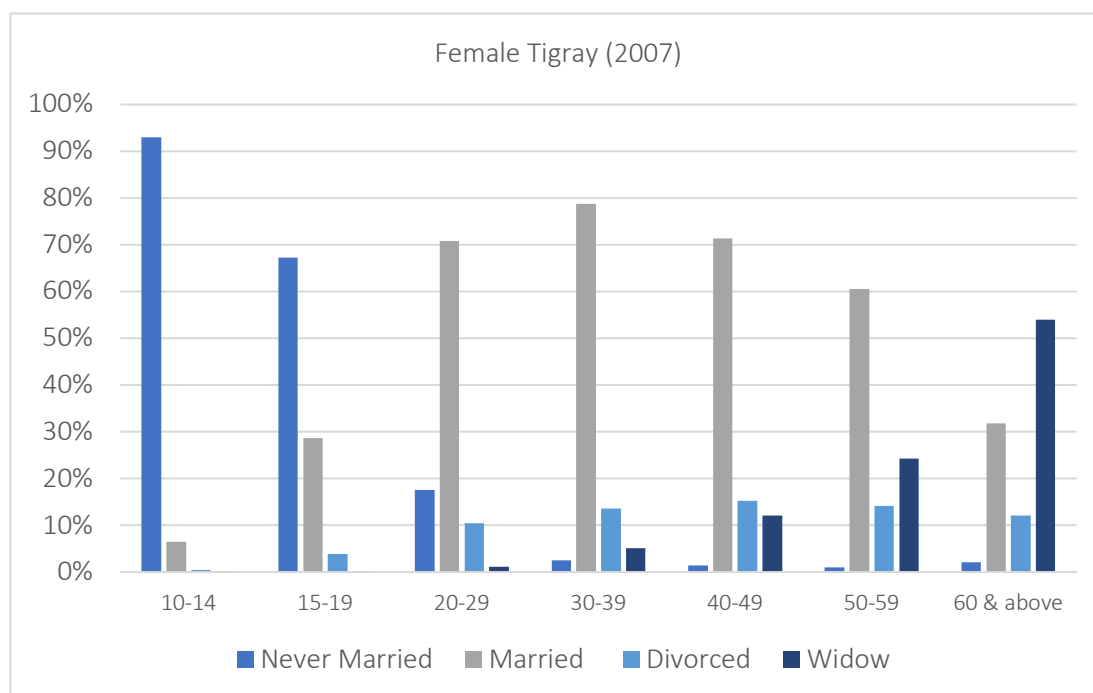


source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2007)

⁵⁶ The census groups the age cohorts from 20 years-old into increments of 5 years, 20 – 24, 25 – 29 and so forth up until 90 years old. The grouping of the age cohorts into increments of 10 years from 20 years-old is done for the sake of readability.

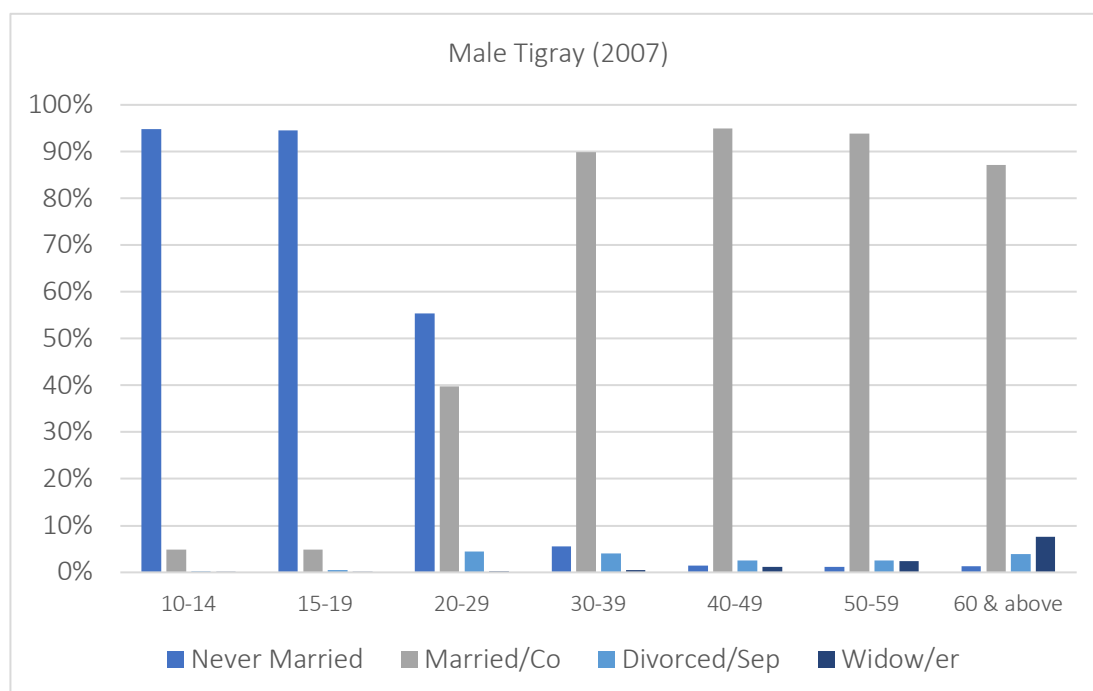
Figure 15 displays female marital status by age and figure 16 below displays male marital status by age.

Figure 15: Female marital status by age



source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2007)

Figure 16: Male marital status by age



source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2007)

The data from the census supports the age-disparity findings, the percentage of men married increases per age-cohort with the largest increase of fifty-one percent (51%) between age-cohorts twenty to twenty-nine (20–29) and thirty to thirty-nine (30-39) peaking at ninety-five percent (95%) at forty to forty-nine (40-49), and only marginally decreasing in the proceeding age-cohorts. However, the opposite is true for women, marriage rates begin to decrease from age-cohort thirty to thirty-nine (30-39). The data suggests that men are overrepresented in re-marriage rates across Ethiopia, and women are overrepresented in widow and divorce rates. From age cohort thirty to thirty-nine (30-39) the incidence of widowhood starts to increase from five percent (5%) to twelve percent (12%) for age cohort forty to forty-nine (40-49); then jumps to twenty-four percent (24%) for age cohort fifty to fifty-nine (50-59); and to fifty-four percent (54%) for above sixty (60).

Many divorced women in Ethiopia choose not to remarry, all the divorced participants said they would not get remarried regardless of their age-cohort. This was indicative to their personal experiences with their first husbands, only two of the widowed participants had remarried but then later divorced, their first marriages were successful and harmonious, below Yehudit recounts her first and second marriage and why she will not re-marry:

‘I was happier with my first husband, he was a literate person and he knew how to do everything well. He was a chef at the cement factory in Mekele - he cooked for the children and fed them from his own hands. He treated them well and loved his children very much. He benefited from foreigners who came to Mekele - the people who were working in the cement factory and he received tips, and every night he would bring things for his children. But, he passed away, he was a quality person.

After some time, I moved here to Koraro, I was born here, and I started to live here, then I re-married but I was not happy. You are unhappy if their behaviour is not the same as your first husband. You get used to being treated in a particular way and when your second husband doesn't behaviour in the same way it makes you sad.

Many women will live in suffering [physical, psychological and sexual abuse] with their bad husbands. For example, if the women is a wife of the priest, if she believes in another religion, she cannot go out and worship freely because she is a wife of a priest. She will be confined to her house. It is not common to have a husband like my first one, it's about 1 in 100. I do not want to marry again' – Yehudit.

Further, the marital status trends provide insight into demographic ageing and socio-cultural norms that support these trends. The high incidence of male re-marriage rates suggests that ageing men are less vulnerable to poverty than ageing women. On the dissolution of the marriage contract, men lose household labour rather than essential *first-generation* assets,

whereas, women lose their access to the marital *first-generation* assets. Replacing reproductive labour is easier for men than it is for women to replace other essential assets. Further, the gender division of labour ensures that ageing men are cared for by their younger wives, as caring for the elderly and sick are the reproductive obligations of women. This was observed in Lema's house, at sixty-five he no longer farms his land, he employs a day labourer and his sons to work the fields, and his wife who is fifteen years younger than him is responsible for maintaining the household and caring for him and their nine children. However, a slightly different picture emerges for ageing women, although, in Tigray intergenerational households is uncommon; eleven percent (11%) of women aged sixty and above go to reside with their children; two percent (2%) of women aged between fifty to fifty-nine; and less than half a percent of women aged between thirty to thirty-nine (CSA, 2007). Divorced and widowed women are dependent on each other, thus, reinforcing the importance of social capital between female-headed households, chapter five explored how age intersects with the accumulation of social capital between female-headed households.

Following on from age and education disparity between spouses, to be marriageable a girl must be socialised to be what the participants called a *good-wife*. The conceptualisation of the *good-wife* constructs the feminine social identity, it is embedded in the ascribed gender roles of women, to be submissive and respectful of their husbands, embrace motherhood and undertake reproductive labour. These findings are indicative to work of other scholars on Ethiopia, Wilder (2007) found that girls are socialised to be subservient and obedient, and from a young age engage in reproductive labour, and Mengesha, *et al.*, (1996) found that girls are:

'...socialised to be modest, obedient, and submissive. In most communities, a wife's unconditional obedience to her husband has been considered the cardinal virtue of a well-raised woman. So every parent is expected to take the utmost effort to instil this quality in their daughters. In addition to the expected morality, girls have been trained in the domestic skills of cooking, cleaning, childcare, crafts, and any other necessary requirements that qualify them for their future role as dutiful wives' (113).

The *good-wife* narrative is an embodiment of the gender division of labour and the submission of women to male authority. The excerpts below reflect how women reproduce gender roles and norms by socialising girls within the *good-wife* narrative:

'Socialisation is the responsibility of the women, a women give birth and until the child goes to school, he stays with the women. Daughters were socialised in the household to do domestic tasks. However, nowadays girls can go to school, but they

still have to come home to complete their domestic tasks’ – Mullu traditional midwife.

‘A good wife is caring for husband, children, controlling every activity in the household’ – Gelila.

‘I believe a good wife that making injera, coffee, looking after children. Because the norm in the culture inherit such things. The society are like separate work and activities, there is men’s work and women’s work. This influences women’s financial status in the society’ – Ayana.

‘A good wife is not be nagging their husband. If he told you can’t go outside to socialise a womens must listen’ – Mullu.

‘Being a good wife is, not to advice him when he does bad ideas. If he breaks something and I ask him to clean up, he thinks I don’t respect him’ – Jalene.

‘A good wife is to work the household things, no matter anything. Until I gave birth, I am responsible to go and fetch water. And on the last pregnancy, I was in suffering for household things’ – Yehudit.

‘Nature makes us less than men. I am respecting whatever he wants’ – Zenaye.

These findings align with the work of Chant (2007) in the Gambia, whereby the cultural constructions of femininity are:

‘...very much bound up in marriage, motherhood which for women in particular implies obligations to others at different stages of their life course which are rarely perceived as negotiable, let alone actually negotiated’ (Chant, 2007:149).

However, the subservient and obedient behaviour of women is reinforced through various forms of gender-based violence. Domestic violence or intimate partner violence is common in rural areas but is rarely reported to the authorities. Violence is used to intimidate and exert control over women’s agency, it is a negative attribute of the power-over a person as argued by Kabeer (2003). Many of the participants did not consider some forms of physical violence from their spouse or family members to be violence. Common forms of violence are smacking, punching or being kicked for failing to do various reproductive tasks, for example not having food ready in time. The Ethiopian Demographic and Health survey (2017) reported that the proportion of married women all experienced intimate partner physical and sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. The participants said that women only report domestic violence if it is extreme, although, the family and community members will

persuade them not to report it to the authorities. Below Nigesti describes her ex-husband's violent behaviour, however, many intimate partner crimes go unpunished:

'My ex-husband and I had major conflict, he was beating me. I called the police, and they have charged him to go to court. He was charged for one month, and afterwards he was released from jail, and received a fine. Now a days he has calmed down and he stays away from me. He never helps me with his child, he is far away from here' – Nigesti.

Further, another form of domestic violence that is practised exerting power-over young girls to ensure submission and obedience is FGM/C⁵⁷. Eight of the participants had experienced FGM/C by the time they were twelve-years-old, and only five of the participants had performed FGM/C on their daughters. However, because the practice is criminalised in Ethiopia, this made discussing FGM/C extremely difficult whereby most of the participants avoided discussing the practice. Although two older participants were comfortable to openly discuss FGM/C, they both claimed that although it is illegal, it is still widely practised throughout Ethiopia. Ethiopia has one of the highest FGM/C rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, whereby, it is, estimated that around seventy-four percent (74%) of girls have undergone the practice by the time they are fourteen-years-old (UNICEF, 2013). Ethiopia ratified CEDAW in 1981 prohibiting FGM/C and other harmful practices towards girls and women, here within is the tension between the legislation that criminalises FGM/C, and the socio-cultural practices that reproduce the practice. Mullu's explanation as to why FGM/C is practised provides insight into cultural norms that rarely go unchallenged, and women's roles in reproducing the social custom:

'We don't actually know why we do it, we just inherited from our forefathers, there is no book stating that it must be practised as far as I know. It is ignorance within the society, the practice is not related with religion, lack of awareness and it's difficult to radically change cultural practices. Even when I was younger I used to have doubts about this practice.

⁵⁷ **Type I** — Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce (clitoridectomy). **Type II** — Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (excision). **Type III** — Narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and appositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris (infibulation). **Type IV** — All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterisation' (WHO, 2008:4).

Now the government is trying to stop it, we are trying to create awareness which she has received from the government, but, people ignore us. They consider that we are advising them incorrectly. They are trying to create the awareness during the coffee ceremony – Mullu.

The practice in the Ethiopian Orthodox communities is not attributed to ensuring a young girl's virtue, but rather, to ensure her conformity to gender norms through violence and harm impacting their social well-being. Three explicit reasons were given as to why FGM/C is practised all of which relate to removing agency; the first, is to ensure the young bride will be fearful of others, the second, to ensure that she will perform her familial tasks well, and lastly, to ensure that she will not sexually dominate her husband – emasculate him. These reasons provide for insight into a social concept that by controlling the feminine the masculine is affirmed; the above section explored this through the gender division of labour, men who undertake the work of women are emasculated by the community. Further, if a young girl is not circumcised it could be grounds for an annulment bringing shame to her household. Below Mullu continues describing FGM/C, however, it is a contentious topic to discuss with people from outside of the community, Mullu's youngest daughter Aynalem was objecting to her revealing detailed information. Mullu's excerpt also highlights the involvement of different community members, such as the role of eye mother who is paid a fee, the practice has economic significance to the eye mothers – the cutters. She also describes the difference of the practice in the past, it was a public affair, the community would be involved when a girl was to be circumcised:

Mullu: 'Recently there is less FGM, in the early times I practised FGM, all of daughters have been circumcised except my youngest, she is fifteen-years-old. Especially after the law the passed, everyone is scared to practice it openly. But, look everyone practised, especially the intellectuals, educated people like a judge.

Although it is not like the passed openly displayed, they practice it in private in the typical rural villages where others do not know you. The society perceives a girl who didn't practice FGM in a negative way, for example, if she breaks stuff or if she misbehaves, people are saying she did that or behaves that way because she is not circumcised.

Aynalem: 'Why are you talking about other places, why are you talking about this issue, why are you not hiding it?'

Mullu: 'I am telling them the reality'

Aynalem: 'you are accusing the others'

Mullu: 'I don't care. I know that it is practised even from the UK in Ethiopia. In the past we used to call relatives and select an eye mother 'Abelij', it is a public affair. People practice in secret now.

Research assistant: What is a husband's perception of an uncircumcised wife?

Mullu: He may know if she is or isn't circumcised during sex, but he does know well if she is a virgin during sex. But, if he hears from a relative or if he knows himself she is not circumcised, he and his family will insult her and her family, she is insulted for not being circumcised, and her family is insulted for not circumcising her.

If the girl is not circumcised her clitoris will be erect like a man's penis, they don't want to see that (by they she means the society). If the clitoris is not removed, the woman will enjoy sex and dominate her husband in bed, she will be good at sex, he will fear her that she will be good at sex, he doesn't want to see the clitoris. The clitoris makes the mans feel inferior (emasculated).

Customary, it is, through the institution of marriage that women transition from daughter-to-wife-to-mother, motherhood completes women's social transformation from child-to-adult bequeathing women with community social status as adult community members. Kabeer (1994) argues that this transition indicates women's evolving status to a male guardian and their decline of economic independence. The social status as an adult allows women to be active social and political members in the community through their improved agency, allowing women to access to resources through the Kebele and with other community members. Mariem a twenty-two-year-old woman recounts her story when she approached the Kebele to acquire land:

'I want to have my own land, the Kebele leaders say I am too young, you need to have a husband and children first. It is not fair. I am excluded from access to land because I don't have a family' – Mariem.

Motherhood informs the social identity of women and elevates their social status, thereby, linking children to the local conceptualisation of wealth. Based on participant's narratives, the social processes that shape female-headed households' access to basic needs is linked to them transforming into adult community members, which requires them to transition from male-headed households to female headship through the dissolution of the marriage contract. Mariem twenty-two-years-old participant and Alemnesh thirty-one-years-old reflect on the social transition of girls to women:

‘The society looks at me differently because I don’t have children, they don’t take me seriously when I voice my opinions, they say I am too young and I should sit down and keep quiet’ – Mariem.

‘If you have children you can have different kind of respect, if I didn’t give birth no one will respect me, they will assume I am a girl’ – Alemnesh.

Children represent wealth embodying a plethora of personal, social and reproductive value. They are a source of happiness, joy, and pride for women, revered as a divine blessing in Ethiopian orthodoxy. Infertility and miscarriages are believed to be a celestial curse, an ideological position resonating from deeply entrenched religious doctrine, superstition, and limited knowledge of women’s reproductive health. Further, FGM/C increases the risk of infertility through various infections (WHO, 2008;2016a). The inability to conceive negatively affects women’s sense of self-worth, personal identity, and social status. Motherhood plays a role in shaping the social identity of the feminine, linking women’s social status to their family and household roles. Customary children are conceived through the institution of marriage. This is not to say that women don’t have children outside of marriage, many do, however, this lies outside social norms and is considered taboo. Motherhood completes women’s social progression to adult community members; the narratives below reflect how motherhood shapes women’s social identity and sense of self-worth:

‘The society look at women differently if she has no children, because a child is a gift from god - therefore she is not blessed. And, no one will treat her apart of the society. The society will give you respect when you give birth’ – Eddel.

‘If the woman is barren she can’t get respect from the society. The society consider children you are the most respected, it is the ability to reproduce’ – Wezeran.

‘If you have children, it is, not the same if you don’t, the view from the society is different, they treat you differently’ – Dinha.

When I have children I can work so I can come wealthy’ – Alemnesh.

‘First is my children, if I keep them safe that is all my wealth, real wealth. I get respect from the society’ – Nigesty.

‘I am proud because I am wealthy, I have children, money and house’ – Hanna.

‘First of all is children, and then after that if you are working hard and if you have money to materials and if you have health. My social status changed in the community was when I had my child.’ – Mariem.

‘If you do not have children you feel inferior. If you have children it is not the same if you don’t - the view from the society is different and they treat you differently’ – Mimi.

6.4 Dissolution of the marriage contract

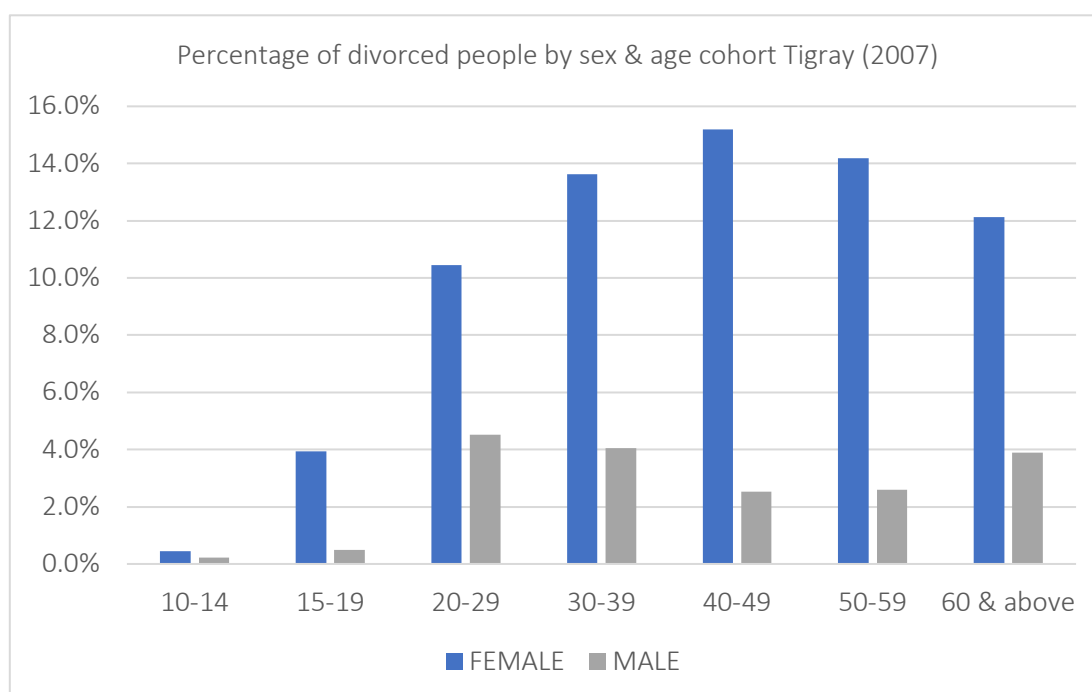
The dissolution of the marriage contract occurs through annulment, divorce or widowhood, divorce is common in Ethiopia, with the average first marriage lasting for seven-point-six years (7.6 years) (CSA, 2013). The first stage of the divorce proceedings passes through the Kebele’s social courts traditionally known as the *baito* (male only), who will hand the dispute over to a group of elders (male only) who will encourage the couple to seek resolution. Although divorce is common, it is not encouraged within a community. If the couple is not able to resolve their differences the elders will inform the *baito* and formal divorce proceedings will proceed (Egziabher and Tegegne, 1996). Patrilocal customs disenfranchise women through the divorce proceedings, the *baito* prioritises local customs over legislation reformations of the Family Code 2000. These findings support the above arguments over the tensions that are in constant interaction between legislation and socio-cultural customs, the findings align with Tura’s (2014) research on legalisation reform in Ethiopia:

‘The government authorities at Kebele level are also very much hesitant to enforce the legal rights of women. Instead of the modern laws, the customary practices of dispute resolution are still prevailing in the community. Thus, although there is strong statutory recognition of a woman’s right to rural land, this study shows that much remain untouched on implementation of the law’ (34).

Further, other contributing variables that make women vulnerable to the *baito* is their low education attainment, their lack of knowledge of how to challenge the *baito* through the Woreda courts, and their lack of financial resources to bring their case to the Woreda courts. Consequently, men’s social capital with community elders and the *baito* is greater, as they are the local authority within their natal villages. Women’s vulnerability to the arbitrators is a consequence of early-marriage and patrilocal customs, they are subject to unequal power relations within the negotiation proceedings, their husbands and their kin, and the *baito*. Kabeer (2005) argues that gender often embodies structures of power that go unchallenged and accepted as the social norm removing women’s agency – ‘power relations are most effective when they are not perceived as such’ (14). Women’s unequal position within the divorce proceedings mirrors their unequal position within the marriage. The above sections

examined the assets women bring into the marriage through their inheritance and in-kind gifts on the day of their marriage. The rights of women to claim access to *first-generation* assets depend upon the terms of the marriage contract which set out ownership of assets that are intergenerationally acquired and the division of conjointly acquired assets upon the dissolution of the marriage contract. The Family Code 2000 acknowledges the proceedings of traditional marriage contracts and supports the agreements made regarding the liquidation and division of assets on the dissolution of the marriage contract. Although, the rights of women are strengthened by the code women are still at a disadvantage. Figure 17 below reflects the divorce rates by age cohort between women and men in the 2007 population census; divorced rates are feminised while re-marriage rates are masculinised as examined above. The 2007 population census data indicates that eighty-two percent (82%) of all divorced people in Tigray are women with the trend holding true at country level (CSA, 2007).

Figure 17: Divorce figures by sex and age



Source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2007)

Following on from the divorce proceedings women will migrate back to their natal villages with their portable household assets and their children. However, many women are vulnerable to ostracism from their natal homes, divorce brings about shame upon their parent's household, culturally it is believed that she was not socialised properly to be a *good-wife*. This affects the social standing of her father's household, many women are

encouraged not to leave their bad marriages by their parents, below Yehudit, Abeba and Jalene reflect on divorce. Their quotes highlight the importance of community social status reinforcing the essentialness of social capital, further their quotes suggest that it is the obligation of the woman to maintain the marriage:

‘Everyone observes the society, tradition will dictate for women to live with their bad husband - the society will perceive them negatively if she divorced and lives in a rental house - they will gossip and insult you if you leave your husband and live on your own’ – Yehudit.

‘It is, quite common but it is true that there is an influence in the society, even their parents are nagging them to leave the society because the society will hate them, and they will gossip about them, they will say, you didn’t do the good things that’s why she divorce’ – Abeba.

‘When I separated from my husband, I didn’t have any opportunity in my parent’s village, I was told to go out, all I could do is come in Koraro to work here and work hard for my children like a slave’ – Jalene.

It is very difficult for women to remain in their ex-husband’s village after they divorce, socially they are not permitted to remarry another person from the same village (Howard and Smith, 2006). This is reflected in Yehudit’s quote above, if women leave their husband’s and live on their own, they are ridiculed by the community. Although, Howard and Smith (2006) found in their research that women who remain in their husband’s village and have secured access to a parcel of land, customary they are obligated to give-up their parcel if they get remarried. It is in the best interest of women to migrate into another rural village and try acquiring land through the local government than remain in their ex-husband’s village. Further, widows face a similar problem, particularly if they do not have a son who can inherit the land. In Tigray, it is, customary for the children to migrate out of their natal household with their mothers, divorced and widowed women relocate with various number of dependents and limited assets. The implications of patrilocality and divorce are reflected in Dinha, Jalene, Tekle, Yehudit, and Zahra’s narratives below:

‘It is, not common for the women to leave their children with their husbands when they divorce, even if the women has to go somewhere, they will leave their children with their family’ – Tekle.

‘Women are left with the responsibility of the children when their husbands leave them. Whether you are happy or not, or secure or not, married or not, you are responsible for bringing up the children’ – Yehudit.

‘I am from Koraro, and my child’s father is from Koraro, and he doesn’t help me. He just started another family. He is 7 years older than me. No one helps me with the baby, I take care of my daughter. It is very common for men to abandon their children and not support them’ – Zahra.

6.5 Female headed-households and community entitlements

Following on from the above, the pathway to female-headship is through the institution of marriage; divorce, separation and widowhood. Female-headship through non-marriage is uncommon in rural areas and is usually the result of being unsuitable for marriage, the percentage of women never married from thirty years old and above range between one to two percent (1% – 2%), see figure 15 above. Although there are some younger women aged between twenty and twenty-nine-years old (20 – 29) who choose to head their own households before they get married, this phenomenon intersects with their socio-economic status, only one participant fell into this category. Eighty-two percent (82%) of female-headed households who participated in this research were divorced, eleven percent (11%) were widows, and ten percent (10%) had never married, see table 6 below.

Table 6: Koraro female-headed household sample

Female-headed household (FHH) sample	Divorced	Widowed	Never married	FHH representation of 36 female participants
Number	23	3	2	28
Percentage	82%	11%	7%	78%

source: M de Jongh sample Koraro Tigray (2015)

The transient rights of women to assets within the institution of marriage require them to re-accumulate fixed *first-generation* assets, land and shelter upon the dissolution of the marriage contract. The previous chapter introduced the importance of strong relationships with the Kebele members to secure access to food aid, the Productive Safety Net Programme and micro-finance. The community entitlements of female-headed households are shaped through their evolving gendered social relations with Kebele members and other male members of the community. The community social status of women is linked to their position in the institution of marriage, households headed by widowed women foster more respect and have a higher social status than women who are divorced, separated or never-

married. Below Konjit describes how her status within Koraro has changed since her husband passed-away:

‘I was very wealthy when my husband was alive, we never had any problems, I had a high social status, now it is changed – the society treat me different’ – Konjit.

Although women are overrepresented in Koraro’s demographics, their participation in the wider community meetings is met with a degree of hostility by the men of the community. Mullu describes her interaction with a man at a local meeting:

‘One day the Kebele asked for a community meeting, fortunately, I am a widow I have no husband. I went representing my house, there I found everyone a man except two other widows. Then I said why is your females are not around and the one man said, do not ask me about my female it is not your issue. You are also not allowed to come here. He consider me to do a forbidden thing. Even still, there is a high perception that the female has to stay in the home’ – Mullu.

This provides insight to the ascribed rights of women within the community that are embedded in the socio-cultural norms of public and private space, public space is perceived to be masculine and private space is feminine. The conceptualisation of the private-public space dichotomy is rooted in the gender division of labour and reinforced through violence and intimidation in public spaces (Day, 2001). Violence against girls and women in public spaces is explored throughout these chapters with respect to Koraro’s fragile ecology and poorly developed infrastructure. Women’s access to public spaces is transient and associated to their reproductive roles, such as collecting water and purchasing food from the market. The liminal rights of women to public space is examined more closely in the following chapter. Aligning with the work of Chant (2016) female-headed households in Koraro without a co-resident spouse are stigmatised as ‘unfortunate’ and ‘deviant’, and their young sons are regarded as being ‘deprived’ of a ‘male role model’ (30). Gebru a male participant explains how children from female-headed households are stigmatised, further, Gebru’s excerpt provides for deeper insight of how the masculine social identity is entrenched in the local lexicon, social praise embodies the masculine and offence embodies the feminine:

‘Even in the insulting things there is difference, they can insult the one that does not have a father, you are the son of a woman – insulting the woman, woman are not able to grow up their children in a good manner, that means.

It is about under estimating, they imagine that the women don't have the ability to grow up their children in good manner, and that is why the society is insulting them as a son of a women.

If you do a good thing you are a man, there is something like that. There is encouragement that the superiority of man is to brought out. That is why the society is involved in such kind of things especially insults and encouragement' – Gebru.

This builds on the social concepts that shape the feminine and the masculine introduced above, here the masculine is informed through the denigration of women's capabilities to socialise their sons within the correct *masculine customs*. Further, it suggests in the absence of a co-resident spouse or an older male relative women are not able to fully fulfil their social reproductive roles. However, men are not criticised by the community for absconding from their reproductive obligations to their children, nor is the legislation of the Revised Family Code 2000 enforced by the Kebele. Below Gebru continues to explain why men don't uphold their responsibilities, he links it to arranged marriages:

'...the reason why men leave women with their children is because they do not arrange their marriage, the men are influenced from their parents...they are like refuse each other, they don't know each other from before, so they become separated from after they are giving birth... then they leave them and go far away... there is a problem that men leave their wives, but because they have no end choice...they don't know each other before and their parents just arrange it and they are forced to marry each other' – Gebru.

However, the quotes from Nigesti, Zenaye and Qebeten provide a different perspective:

'...men do nothing for others, my first husband is dead, but the rest are alive they seem dead, they do nothing for me, they come and ask me for things and go... he comes to have a child with me, gives me nothing for the child and I look after the child' – Nigesti.

'The father of my children has not seen my babies [twins], he is in the southern part of Ethiopia. He called me on the phone and said it's good to hear I have given birth safely. He won't give me money or support, I am 100% responsible for looking after the children financially and emotionally. There are laws that support women to take their husband to court of child support. I don't know the reason why he won't support me, he has another family in another village. I don't think he supports them either. It is very common for men in the region to behave like this, I think that it's an innate response in men, it's their nature' – Zenaye.

‘No one helps me with the baby, I take care of my daughter. It is very common for men to abandon their children and not support them. Maybe there are good men around, but the majority of them are cruel and living for nothing – Qebeten.

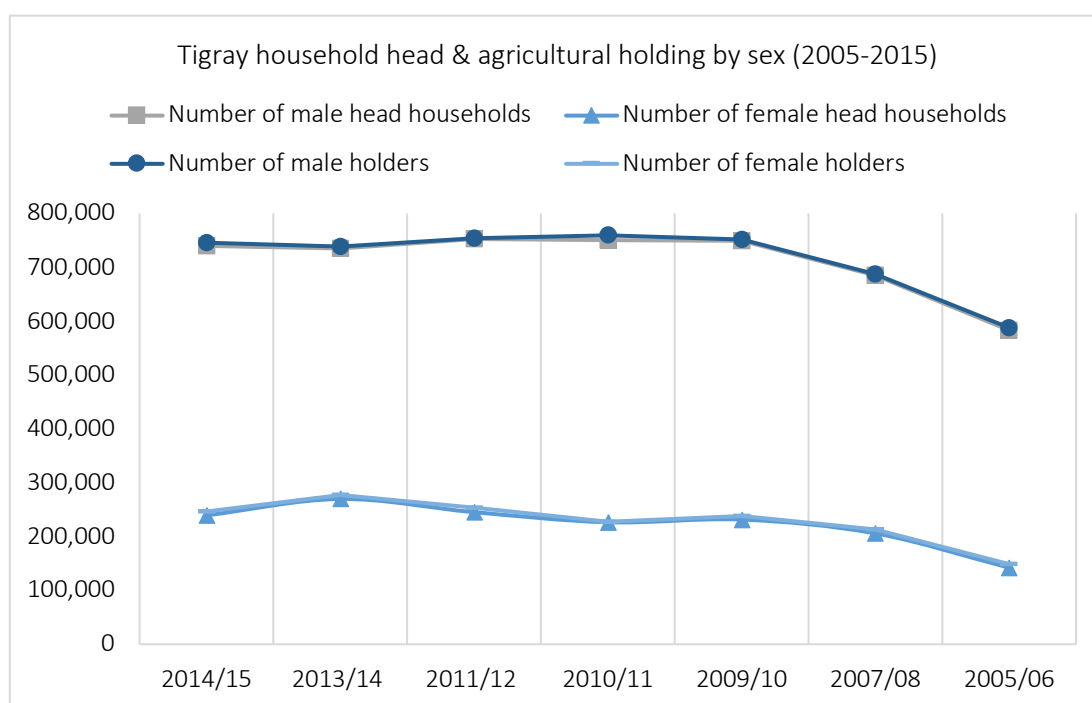
The patriarchal structure of Koraro requires women to continuously renegotiate their ability to participate within the community. The acquisition of housing and land is unequal for female-headed households, this is further explored the following section. Although the social status of women and of their children would increase if they were to remarry, a common theme why women choose not to remarry was suggestive of their loss of intra-household autonomy, strain on limited household resources, and the unequal investment into the household’s livelihood. Many women fear that once they remarry, their husbands assume the status of household head and ownership over household assets and resources, regardless of what assets they bring into the marriage. The gendered entitlements and obligations embodied in the institution of marriage are not renegotiated but assumed, thus, women lose their agency and control over their accumulated household’s assets. This is a *second-generation* strategy (Moser, 2016), abstaining from remarriage secures women’s intra-household agency, prevents the erosion of *first-generation* assets and improves intergenerational asset transfer.

6.6 Accumulating assets

Housing and land are the most important assets in Koraro to support the livelihoods of women, providing shelter and productive assets that can be adapted into economic resources (Kabeer, 1994; Rakodi, 2002). Access to land in Ethiopia is extremely complex encompassing legislation reform, customary law, title and boundary disputes, and gender inequality. The above section examined women’s disenfranchised access to land through inheritance and marriage, only one participant acquired land through inheritance, all the other landholders had to acquire land through the Kebele. Legally the Ethiopian government retains ownership of all land (rural and urban) including all-natural resources offering lifetime leases for peasant farmers and pastoralists. The 2005 Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation Act (proc. 456/2005) guarantees free access to rural land for peasant farmers and pastoralists (Ambaye, 2012). Landholders are granted land ‘usufruct rights’ whereby these rights maybe ‘inherited, donated, leased and rented’, however, the private sale or mortgaging of land use rights is strictly prohibited (Sima, 2016:14). Property, however, may be privately owned (ibid). Accompanying the reformation of the land act, the

government implemented the land certification processes registering farmers' holdings and securing their land rights over the last two decades⁵⁸. Although, it has been widely documented and researched that Ethiopia's inefficient bureaucratic land administration process is a 'major source of concern given the country's level of poverty and development' (Lindner, 2014:2). In Tigray only, the household head (prodigiously male) is registered as the landholder (Haile *et al.*, 2005) which further disenfranchises the rights of women who acquired land through marriage. This is supported by the data gathered from the Ethiopian land utilisation surveys (2005 – 2015), the findings suggest that there is a correlation between registered ownership of agricultural holdings and the sex of household head. Figure 18 and figure 19 plot household headship and agriculture tenure by sex (2005 – 2015) for Tigray and Eastern Tigray zone, the figures reveal how land ownership and household headship are mirrored. In figure 19 there is a spike in years 2010 – 2011 in land registrations, this reflects a period when the local government carried-out registrations.

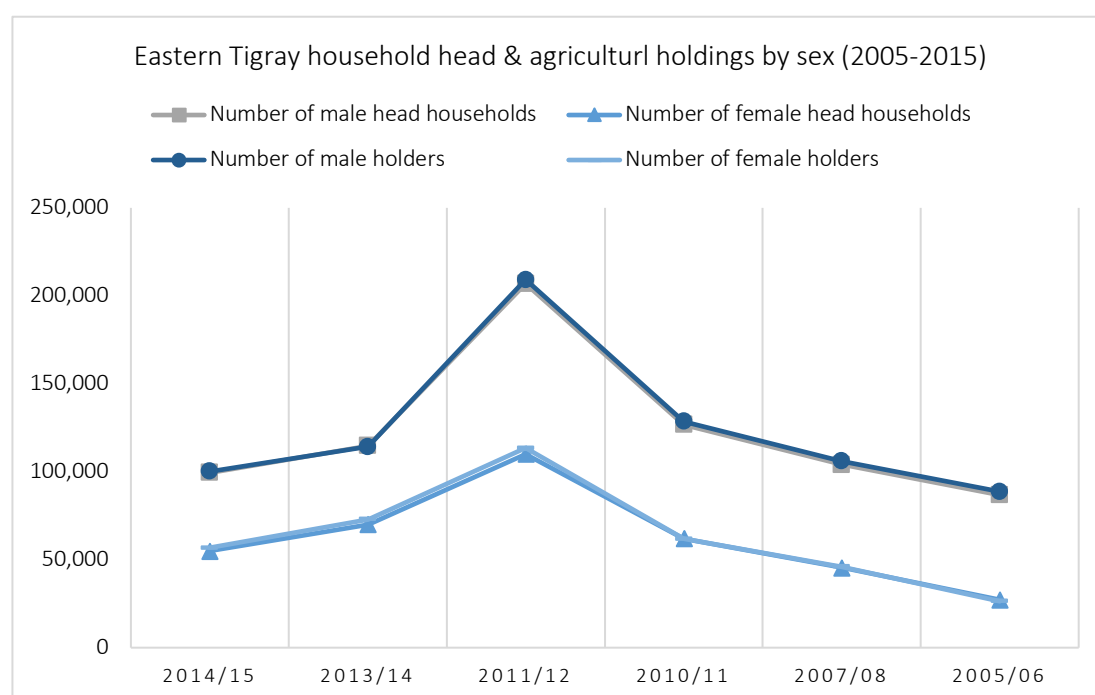
Figure 18: Tigray household head and agricultural holding by sex



source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2006; 2008; 2011; 2012a; 2014a; 2015a)

⁵⁸ 'Land tenure in Ethiopia has undergone dramatic shifts – from feudalistic systems under the monarchy of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974) to socialist land policies under the Derg military government (1974-1991), to the current system under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) who took control in 1991 (Linder, 2014:2).

Figure 19: Eastern Tigray household head and agricultural holding by sex



source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2006; 2008; 2011; 2012a; 2014a; 2015a)

Further, the data suggests that the pathway to female agricultural-land ownership is through female headship, aligning with the work of Chant (2016) that female headship is a portable asset. Although, Chant's work focusses on the intangible aspects of female headship such as improved intra-household agency and providing escape routes for women to leave bad marriages. The findings suggest that female headship increases the likelihood of women to acquire agricultural lands in their own name compared to women in male-headed households. The social status of women and their social capital with the Kebele and community members influences their capabilities to secure land, female-headed households are more vulnerable to land asset accumulation (Chant, 2016). This is associated with the socio-cultural practices that structure the 'unequal division of social and economic space' that disenfranchise women's ability to independently 'mobilise their resources', pinned on cultural taboos that restrict women's agricultural mobility (Kabeer, 1994:141). Although, the Ethiopian government is working to alter this cultural construction dismissing women as farmers – change is slow⁵⁹. Embedded social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities in

⁵⁹ 'Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal right with men' (FDRE Constitution, Art. 35 (1)). Women have the right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property. In particular, they have equal rights with men with respect to use, transfer, administration and control of land. Women shall also enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property (Ibid, Art. 35 (7)) (Tura, 2014:143).

'land use, access, control, ownership and inheritance' interconnect the household with the community (Bird and Espey, 2010:261). The findings suggest that male community members are privileged despite land reforms guaranteeing free access to land for all peasant farmers. There are three pathways that facilitate access to property and land that make female-headed households more vulnerable to asset accumulation. Firstly, access to property and land through kinship and family – addressed in the above sections of this chapter. Secondly, access to land through the Kebele, there are two aspects to this type of access; access to land in Koraro village to build a house and access to land for agricultural production. Thirdly, access to property and land through the informal rental market.

6.6.1 Accumulating land for housing

Women's access to land through the Kebele is unequal, intra-community resource distribution patterns prioritise Koraro's male community members. This is unsurprising, as the Kebele only has one female member, and male community members have access to greater social capital with Kebele members. Female-headed household's experience of poverty is different to male-headed households because of their asymmetrical relationship to community entitlements. Female-headed household's unequal access to land for housing sits at the intersection of their lower financial autonomy, limited access to credit, and their social capital with the Kebele. Further, the financial requirements of women are different from men, women must prove they have enough money to pay for their house to be built. Comparatively, the sum of money men must have is substantially less, because it is men with the support of their kin who will build their house.

The lower financial autonomy of female-headed households' interconnects with various socio-cultural entitlements; the reproductive obligations of women, their poor education attainment tied to early marriage and patrilocal customs, their gendered productive labour entitlements which shape their economic participation in the community, and the limited economic opportunities in Koraro. Further, the limited financial means of female-headed households are exacerbated by Koraro's poor physical infrastructure. Women must send their children to live in Megab, Hawzen or Mekele to attend secondary school which makes them financially and reproductively responsible for two separate households. Alemnesh and Biftu describe this below:

‘I pay my rent and my son's rent in the other village, so he can go to school’ – Alemnesh.

‘My son is in Megab, grade 9, he lives with his friend in Megab and I pay his rent. I send him wood for food, they cook for themselves, but I send the injera its good he is looking after himself. I advise him, he must get good grades’ – Biftu

These findings build on the previous insights of Chant’s (2007) feminisation of responsibility and Brydon’s (2010) feminisation of family responsibility. The vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty increases as women assume the traditional obligations of men who abscond their responsibilities to support the educational needs of their children. This shapes the livelihood strategies of female-headed households, boys are privileged over girls to attend secondary school because of limited financial resources, and women are more dependent on the reproductive labour of girls. The educational needs of young girls are disenfranchised as a household livelihood strategy. This, therefore, impacts the overall social well-being of girls and contributes to the reproduction of the feminisation of vulnerability.

Following on, the capabilities of female-headed households to challenge land discrimination through the Woreda courts is subject to the education attainment and financial resources of women. Agency is the ability to apply endowments to ‘take actions that affect a person’s or household’s well-being’ (Moser, 2016:6) Wubit describes her treatment from the Kebele when she tried to acquire a land title to build her house, and Mimi’s quote mirrors Wubit’s:

‘There is discrimination against women. I am not satisfied at all, I know my rights and duties, but there are limitations because I don’t get what I want when I complain to the Kebele. Because I am woman and there are unfair things on me, the men can get their needs met, but because I am women I don’t get what I want.

You need to know a lot of people, have a wealthy family, have a father or brother need to be in the Kebele. I asked for land for a house, I asked if could build a house. They gave me a false [unfair] statement [response]; you do not deserve to have land you can live at your mamma’s house.

I want my own house so I can work, and help my family. I have not put my money in a bank account because I am debating with the Kebele for land and they will ask me what money do I have to build a house with, but the mens don’t have show the same money to the Kebele. – Wubit.

‘You would usually buy land from the Kebele - but it is overcrowded [high demand] so they deny us to build houses, the Kebele are all mens’ - Mimi.

Limited access to land through the Kebele forces women to access property through the informal rental market. The scarcity of properties and absence of formal rental contracts make female households vulnerable to financial exploitation and violence from landlords. All the participants living in rented properties said they were always anxious that their landlord would increase their rent without notice which would lead to eviction. Insecure tenure agreement increases the vulnerability of female-headed households to Koraro's environmental and economic shocks. However, the vulnerability of female-headed household to their landlords is a symptom of poverty, most landlords are male, only two participants' landlords were female. This is representative of male bias over intra-community resource distribution, male community members have better access to surplus land for housing from the Kebele. Therefore, this finding suggests there is a masculinising of property asset in a community that has feminised population demographics. The power dynamics between male landlords and female tenants was a common theme in the narratives. Although the women were paying rent, the financial exchange embodied in the social contract did not fully legitimise their temporary entitlements to asset ownership and control. Further, the agency of female-headed households is subject to control from their landlords with the intimidation of eviction, and in some cases, women are threatened with physical violence and verbal abuse. The participants expressed feelings of fear for their own and their children's personal security. These findings build on the above insights of the transient rights of women, expanding these rights to the wider community. Further, the unequal power relationship between the landlords and tenant is strengthened through their social relations with the Kebele members and lower community status of female-headed households. The negative power relationship between landlords and tenants reflects Kabeer's (2005) negative attributes of power – power over. However, in some cases renting property can safeguard against state land eviction, the government reserves the right to 'expropriate land for public purposes subject to payment of compensation commensurate to the value of the property on the land' (Sima, 2016:7). This makes property owners vulnerable to the valuation that state places on their property at the time of expropriation. Below Selam, Hanna, Mimi, Konjit and Alemnesh describe their experiences with their landlords:

'There is no written document from the government that supports the tenant, there is informal agreement that makes us vulnerable. I do not feel secure in a rental house, there is not enough homes. Until I get my own house I feel stress' – Selam.

'The owner just comes each month to collect payment, he only cares about payment. If the landlord says we must pay more rent we have to find a new house if

he is not willing to negotiate rent. The landlord will give me a couple of days to find a new house. If the landlord sees I have started shoppings stuff, he will come and tell me my rent is going up, and he will increase my rent from 50 - 80 birr. I want to have my own house, at the moment I feel secure as long as I can pay' – Hanna.

'If the landlord comes he asks do you smoke in my house, you must do this do that - he is very aggressive, he says I can't put anything on the wall - there is no protection from the Kebele' – Mimi.

'If the landlord comes and asks me to get out of his home I have no where to go. Suddenly if the owner hears about anyone else who wants to rent he comes and tells me I want to give the house to another one - can you please add or leave, but when you come back to house you will see the house is closed because he just wants to increase the payment' – Konjit.

'I ask him to give me a day to look for another house, for example there are a lot of teachers who are coming he want to rent the house for a better price even if there is government workers who are coming' – Alemnesh.

However, when the two participants reflected on their tenure agreements with their female landlords a different picture emerged. Female landlords empathise with women who head their own households, they refrain from intimidating their tenants but rather renegotiate the terms of the rental agreement. This is reflective of women's intra-community relations and social capital they share with each other, below Saba describes the relationship she has with her landlord:

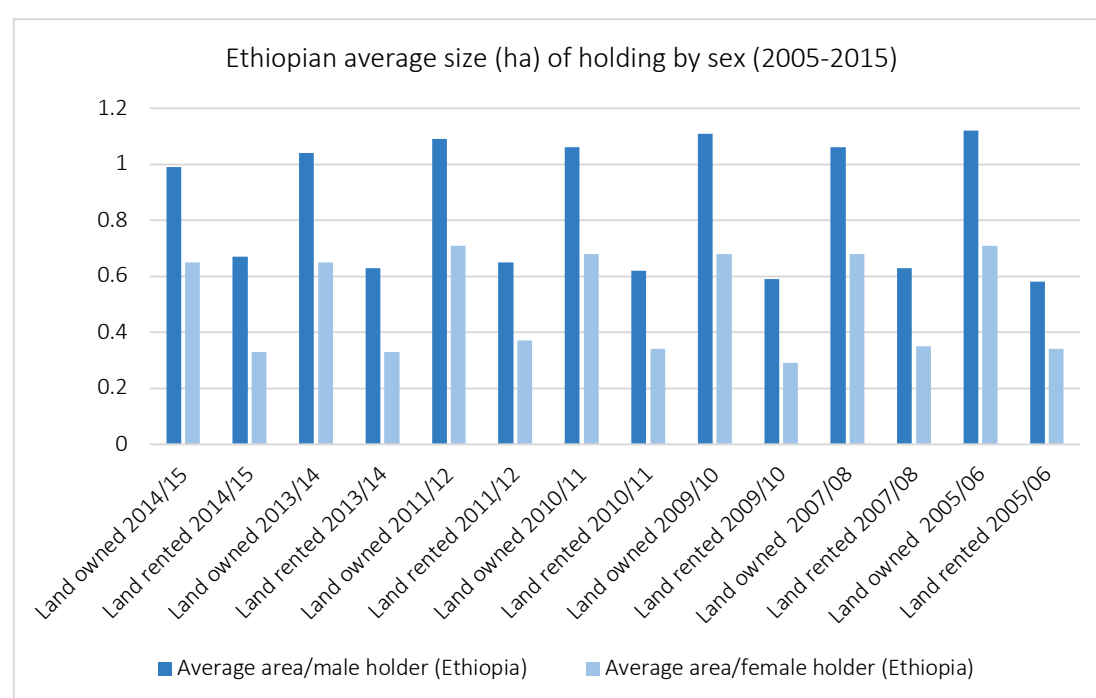
'It is common for women landladies to don't just go put up the rent and tell tenants if they cannot pay they must move out the next day. If she need to increase the rent we have a discussion with them, she give me 15- 30 days notice if I cannot pay' – Saba.

6.6.2 Accumulating land for agricultural production

Following on from above, women's access to property through the rental market increases their likelihood to access agricultural land from the Kebele. In Tigray only, local residences are entitled to agricultural land (Howard and Smith, 2006). This is a common strategy explored by women who migrated to Koraro from neighbouring villages, several participants who rent their properties have secured agricultural tenures through the Kebele. The accumulation of one asset leads to the accumulation of another asset (Moser, 2016). However, securing agriculture tenure is dependent on the recognised status of women as

adult community members and their knowledge of land legislation. The data from the Ethiopian land utilisation surveys indicate that women's access to agricultural tenure is unequal, the size of female holdings are significantly less than male holdings with the average female holding being 0.6 hectares (HA) compared with the average male holding 1.14 hectares across the country (CSA, 2015a). On average female-headed households are smaller than male-headed households which impacts the size of their holdings (CSA, 2015a). Further, female household's holdings are of poorer soil quality and are sloped (Howard and Smith, 2006). Figure 20 below charts agricultural ownership and rent holdings size by sex for Ethiopia from 2005 – 2015, the data shows that female holders are disenfranchised across both lands owned and rented.

Figure 20: Agricultural holding size by sex



source: M de Jongh adapted (CSA, 2006; 2008; 2011; 2012a; 2014a; 2015a)

The data from the land utilisation surveys reflects the gender division of labour of agricultural households and the social identities of women and men. The construction of human behaviour is a product of institutional rules norms and conventions that impact how people live and manage their assets (Kabeer, 2003). The socio-cultural norms that reject women to be farmers, along with their lower ownership over agriculture productive assets and lack of agriculture labour contribute to their smaller land holdings. Further, the cultural taboos that restrict women from being farmers extend to their capabilities to purchase necessary agricultural productive assets, it is improper for women to buy and sell cattle and

agricultural inputs – fertilizer, herbicides and seeds. The restricted access of women from cattle trading excludes them from animal husbandry and participating in the inter-community cattle trading market. Research carried out by the IFPRI found female agricultural holders to be ‘about thirty percent (30%) less likely to own cattle in Tigray’ (Kasa *et al.*, 2015). Further, research conducted by the IGAD⁶⁰ (2013) found that the agricultural value of ‘animal draught power input is around twenty-six- point-four per cent (26.4%) of the value of annual crop production’, based on the ‘average cost of renting plough services’ in Ethiopia⁶¹ (IGAD, 2013:2). According to the Ethiopian Rural Economic Survey (2013), fertilisers and herbicides are classified as the two modern agricultural productive inputs with fertilizer being used in over half of all major grain production in Ethiopia (CSA, 2013).

The gender division of labour contributes to women’s inadequate farming skills and shapes their land utilisation strategies. Although, the Ethiopian government is investing in the development of women’s agricultural skills through establishing large skill transfer networks, increasing the number of female farmers is slow. The previous sections explored the social norms that shape the feminine revealing how the gender division of labour creates binary gender identities. Although, the construction of the feminine gender identity includes cultural taboos that prohibit and restrict women from participating in cultural practices that inform male identity, authority and power. The prohibition of women from essential farming activities, such as ploughing the fields and sowing the seeds, safeguards those productive practices to be masculine. This builds on the insights above that align with the work of Day (2001) ‘femininity is produced through the polarisation of masculine gender identities’ (109-110). Farming is associated with physical strength and is perceived to be masculine, and domestic work is perceived to be less strenuous and associated with the feminine. This creates a visible gender divide, men are physically stronger than women and this reaffirms the assumption that women cannot farm. Below Lema reflects on this cultural construction, however, his excerpt provides for deeper insight into this phenomenon, rejecting women as farmers prevents women from transcending gender boundaries which appropriates characteristics of male identity, such as ploughing the fields or sowing the seeds:

⁶⁰ International Government Authority for Development Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development.

⁶¹ ‘Nearly a third (31%) of the total gross value of livestock output is represented by the value of animal draught power as an input into crop cultivation, an estimated 21.5 billion Ethiopian Birr in 2008-09’ – (IGAD, 2013:2).

‘Naturally, women cannot perform masculine activities, a man can do everything he can do, especially he can do a ploughing the land. People don’t accept this because in tradition womens cannot doing a mans tasks – like for example ploughing. Because womens are not trained in ploughing and sowing the seeds, and the cattles is strong like a mans’ – Lema.

The symbolism of physical strength was used as an example to define differences between men and women, and to justify gender inequality. Below are excerpts from Mariem, Zahra, Rekik and Alemnesh:

‘I am not equal when I work outside with the men on physical strength – Mariem’.

‘We cannot work like men in physical strength, to plough the field you must be strong, the oxen is strong’ – Zahra.

‘Men’s work is physically hard. Building a house, plastering, farming’ – Rekik.

‘It is hard for us womens, farming is mens work, in the society there is men’s work and women’s work’ – Alemnesh.

However, the social value of men’s strength implies superiority, rather than strength in general. This was observed while watching women perform their reproductive work and is portrayed in the photographs in part one of this chapter. The strenuous undertaking of collecting and carrying wood and water for miles is not perceived to be equal to the strenuous work of men. The work of women is defined as inferior because the social status of women is defined as inferior. Yehudit’s excerpt explains this social construction:

‘Men learn this behaviour, its tradition and culture, women must be inferior in every aspect, the perception of men is that they are superior. They oppress us and want to dominate us’ – Yehudit.

Below is an extract from a few statements made by Saba, her son and daughter with regards to gender identity and the social reproduction of these norms:

Saba: ‘My son is better than my daughter, because he is a boy....’

Saba’s son: ‘I think I am better than my sister, my sister can’t do what I can do. I can farm, my sister cannot....’

Saba’s daughter: ‘...no one has taught me to farm...’

The previous chapter touched on the sharecropping schemes between female agricultural holders and local farmers with regards to Koraro's fragile environment and food security. All female holders in Koraro have sharecropping arrangement with farmers with a quarter-three-quarter split of the produce. The farmers will provide the draught animal power, labour and seeds in exchange from three-quarters of the produce. These findings align with other studies in Ethiopia (Holden *et al.*, 2011;2016) and suggest that significantly more female-headed households are engaged in sharecropping schemes than male-headed households. Further, another reason why female holders will enter in sharecropping arrangements is because of the lack of male household labour and productive inputs, such as seeds, fertilisers and draught animal power. The terms of the sharecropping agreement are *locally-standardised* by male farmers, thus, removing women's agency to negotiate the terms and value of their land. Koraro's environment shapes the level of engagement of farmers with female holders' land, this depends on where the holding is located, and the soil quality of the land. Women have no control over how much time the farmers invest in their land and what they plant. The excerpts below from Biftu and Astar describe the agreements they hold with the farmers, further, Biftu describes the quality of her land. Zufan explains why she rents her land and Eddel describes how the productivity of her land has declined since the death of her husband, her quote provides insight into the vulnerability of female holders to food insecurity in sharecropping agreements:

'I have land which I rent to a farmer, and he pays me one-quarter of the produce and he keeps three-quarters. The land is too bad, it is, the only option I have to give them the land to farm, it's not productive land. The government gave me the land, the food I get from the farmer I keep for myself' – Biftu.

'There is no formal agreement, I have a farm land. I rents my land to the farmer, he farms teff, I takes one-quarter and he takes three-quarters' – Astar.

'I don't have an ox to farm my own land, I don't have material objects for farming – seeds and fertilisers, so I rent my land to the farmer' – Zufan.

'I lost my husband in battle. When I was with my husband I would eat throughout the day and live a comfortable life, he was a farmer, now I rent my land to a farmer and I don't eat the same' – Eddel.

Koraro's changing environment impacts the agricultural strategies of farmers, the sporadic rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts in Tigray in 2015 forced farmers to switch from growing food crops to stimulate crops (Singh, *et al.*, 2016). Switching from food crops to cash crops has further implications on female-headed households' food security, all the holders

are dependent on the harvest from their fields. Although, the harvest does not meet the food needs of the household women will utilise one of the food coping strategies explored in the previous chapter. Below Tkaw and Nigesti reflect on their household's food stocks from the failed harvest from her holding:

‘But now I am worried about future days, there isn’t enough food’ – Tkaw.

‘The only we care about the farm land, we are to worry, the Kebele must helps the farmers’ – Nigesti.

Further, farmers are reluctant to commit to long-term agreements with female holders this creates uncertainties for women's management of their household food stock. Sometimes farmers will abruptly terminate the agreement to mitigate their risks and invest their labour and productive inputs into their crops during times of environmental hazards. This has detrimental impacts on the female-headed household's food security and increases their vulnerability to Koraro's external shocks. The above findings suggest that although female-headed households may have greater agency at intra-household level, their community agency and well-being is still dependent on their relationships with male community members and authority to secure access to essential *first-generation* assets.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter examined why women are more vulnerable to Koraro's fragile ecological landscape by scrutinising the socio-cultural practices that shape their allocation of entitlements and obligations within the household and community. The chapter addressed how the institution of marriage informs the life cycle of Ethiopians and their ascribed rights and responsibilities with respect to family and kinship. Further, the chapter examined how these inform the livelihood strategies of female-headed households and their community entitlements. The institution of marriage is responsible for the formation of new agricultural households and the gender division of labour. The chapter found that the agrarian household is an institutionalised space that reproduces the socio-cultural practices of both the household and economy. The division of labour creates binary gender identities and children are socialised into their ascribed gender roles from a young age. The chapter found evidence of constant tensions between the improved legal rights of women and the traditional practices that disenfranchise the rights of women. The pre-nuptial negotiations

are the ascribed rights of men to agree upon the bride price and dowry, in female-headed households absent fathers maintain this right. There is evidence of harmful traditional practices to ensure the marriageability of girls, the explicit and implicit practice of under-age marriage and FGM/C. The loss of education endowments is fundamental in shaping the future capabilities of women, which contribute to their vulnerability to poverty. Further, the patrilocal customs reveal the transient rights of women within the institution of marriage, which are also reflected in the portable reproductive assets gifted to brides. Marriage embodies the social transition of girls through motherhood to become adult community members. The chapter found remarriage rates to be masculinising, and divorce rates to be feminising and the rights of women are disenfranchised by the dissolution of the marriage contract. The social customs of divorce further reveal the transient rights of women, women are at risk of ostracism from their natal village. The chapter found that the pathway to female headship is through the institution of marriage, and the community entitlements of female-headed households are shaped through their evolving gendered social relations with Kebele members and other male members of the community. Although women acquire a greater sense of intra-household agency, the participation within the wider community is dependent on their relationships with other male community members. Further, the chapter found that although the social status of women increases if they remarry, women choose not to remarry as a livelihood strategy to ensure their intra-household agency and ownership over assets. The findings suggested that women who acquire shelter through informal agreements with landlords are vulnerable to eviction and sometimes to physical violence. Further, the chapter found that female-headed households' access to agricultural holdings is unequal, with female holdings being substantially less than male holdings. The findings suggest that the land utilisation strategies of women are shaped by the gender division of labour and the socio-cultural norms that restrict the participation of women in agricultural production. Female holders have no choice but to enter into unequal sharecropping agreements with local farmers impacting their household's food security. The following chapter seven will explore how the gender division of labour influences the capabilities of women to adapt their productive and reproductive assets into economic resources and opportunities. The chapter will examine the socio-cultural norms that shape the economic participation of women in Koraro, and how this impacts their capabilities to sustain the livelihoods of their households.

Chapter Seven: Koraro Economic Entitlements

7 Introduction

The previous chapter explored why women are more vulnerable to Koraro's fragile ecological landscape by scrutinising the ascribed rights and responsibilities of women within the household and community. The chapter revealed the entitlements of women to be transient with respect to the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and the community, thus, shaping their vulnerability to Koraro's ecology. This chapter further investigates the gender division of labour with respect to the economic participation of women in the rural economy. What work are women entitled to do, and how does this shape the livelihood strategies of female-headed households? This is explored through the life experiences of thirty-six women, three men, and relevant secondary data from the documentary analysis.

The chapter begins by examining the complexities of market participation by dividing economic engagement into three interconnected market spaces, macro-markets, meso-markets and micro-markets. The section will explore how the gender division of trade shapes the unequal participation of women in each market space and how this contributes to the economic livelihoods of female-headed households. Starting with macro-market spaces, the chapter explores the marginalisation of women in small urban centres and cities, the transient trading rights of women in these spaces and their participation in specialised trading markets i.e. livestock market. Following on the chapter moves onto the engagement of women in the meso-market spaces that shapes intercommunity trading on selected market days. Here, the section explores how women build on their social networks on market day and where women participate in the coffee ceremony in these market spaces. The chapter then moves onto the economic engagement of women in Koraro's micro-market spaces, the section examines how the gender division of labour shapes the participation of women in the Productive Safety Net Programme.

Following on the next section explores the economic strategies of female-headed households by adapting their shelters into an essential productive asset. Here home enterprises are separated into private and public economic spaces, the section closely examines the strategies of women who run public home enterprises that sell traditional alcohol in the community, tela houses. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and the contributions of this chapter.

7.1 Market structures and gendered spaces

The previous chapter explored the private-public space dichotomy embedded in the gender division of labour and the marginalisation of women in agriculture production. The polarization of labour divides space into female and male spaces; women within the household – private space and men outside the household – public space. Space embodies ‘physical space’ and ‘social space’; created through various ‘social relations and the interactions of social groups’, whereby, ‘social identities’ are products of a particular space (van Blerk, 2011). Men’s unrestricted access to public spaces shapes the masculine social identities and relations in the household and community. This reinforces their agency and control over public spaces influencing all aspects of civil society, markets and the State. Conversely, women’s access to public spaces is restricted by socio-cultural norms ascribing their roles to the household and reproductive labour. Men and women, therefore, experience public space differently. Women’s asymmetrical relationship with public space marginalises their interaction in various trading markets, thus shaping their economic livelihoods through the gender division of trade. Mullu’s excerpt reveals how women’s income is shaped by the gender division of labour. Abeba and Mariem reflect on the restrictions of women’s social and economic participation in the wider community:

‘...the society are like separate work and activities, there is men’s work and women’s work. This influences women’s financial status in the society’ – Ayana.

‘In all the aspects in the society there is encouragement for girls that is quite common in orally, but not physically and in actions. It is, only in speech, some of the men encourage us women, but its only speak. We only benefit a little bit with work. There is equality in words but not in reality, us women are in a low financial status’ – Abeba.

‘But it is restricted to do men’s work, it’s not the norm in society’ – Mariem.

Koraro’s local economy is typical of a rural Ethiopian nuclear village; highly dependent on agricultural production and surrounding rural markets and small urban centres; Megab, Wukoro, Hawzen and Senkata market⁶². Chapter five explored how the environmental shocks and the hungry season shape the market exchange conditions within the region by reducing household income and purchasing power. The chapter further found the poor transport infrastructure exacerbates these conditions by reducing female-headed

⁶² Senkata market is the Eastern Tigray agricultural wholesale market (WFP, 2008).

households' capabilities to connect to markets in other regions. Aligning with the work of Kabeer (2003) on rural Sub-Saharan African economies, Koraro's economy is multi-layered intersecting the formal, informal, subsistence, reproductive and care economies. Ethiopia's agricultural and rural nonfarm sectors are 'mutually reinforcing', the nonfarm sector is an 'essential part of agricultural input and output markets, and agricultural service delivery in general' (World Bank, 2009a:2). Contrary to the World Bank (2009) report on Ethiopia's rural markets being small, fragmented, and localised, the findings suggest that households participate in numerous rural and small urban markets. Further, it is not only community members who trade in Koraro's local market place but also traders from the surrounding areas who utilise the market space. Although rural markets are small and localised, they are interconnected rather than fragmented spaces. This chapter examines the complexities of market participation by dividing economic engagement into three categories; macro-markets, meso-markets and micro-markets. The identification of separate trading markets provides insight into the unequal participation of women in each market space and how this contributes to the economic livelihoods of female-headed households. Table 7 below displays the trading markets and where they are located. Aligning with Kabeer's (2003) findings that the type of work women and men do is a better indicator of poverty 'than the fact that they work' (136). Here, the type of trading and where the trading takes place is a better indicator of women's vulnerability to poverty than the fact that they trade. Further, the productive capabilities of women are shaped by their access to economic assets, social capital and the market exchange conditions. The Ethiopian government defines productive activity as:

'... an act of selling or making available to the market, the output of an activity whole or in part in kind or cash. Could be working in public or privately-owned enterprise on salary wage' (CSA, 2014:64).

Dividing economic trading into separate markets aligns with a study carried out by the IPMS⁶³ (2008) on market orientation of smallholders on selected grains in Ethiopia, the study separated market activities into five markets: markets in peasant association [Kebele]; markets in nearby peasant associations; markets in other districts [woredas]; markets in

⁶³Improving Productivity and Market Success (IPMS) of Ethiopian Farmers Project and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) undertook research in five districts across Ethiopia over several years: Alaba and Dale (Southern Region); Ada'a-Liben (Oromia Region); Fogera (Amhara region); and, Atsbi-Wonberta (Tigray Region) in 2005 (Gebremedhin and Hoekstra, 2008:5).

district capital; and, markets in regional capital (Gebremedhin and Hoekstra, 2008). The IPMS's markets are categorised according to distance to various trading areas for smallholders. Table 8 cross references this research's market structure with the IPMS's market structures.

Table 7: Market trading structure

Macro markets	Meso markets	Micro markets
Inter-regional trade <i>Hawzen, Senkata Market, Mekele and Addis Ababa</i>	Inter-community trade <i>Koraro & Neighbouring Communities</i>	Intra-community trade <i>Koraro</i>
Trade with larger towns (Hawzen/Megab) including services Livestock market	Community market days	
Trade in Cities (Senkata Market, Mekele & Addis Ababa)		
International Trade (Mekele & Addis Ababa)		

Table 8: IMPS market structure

Market Structure	IPMS Markets	Location
Micro markets Intra-community trade	Market in PA	Koraro village
Meso markets Inter-community trade	Market in nearby PA	Market days in surrounding villages in Hawzen woreda (including on Koraro's market day): Dugum market day Koraro market day
	Markets in other districts/woredas	Market days in villages outside of Hawzen woreda
Macro markets Inter-regional trade	Markets in district capital	Trade in large towns and small urban centres: Megab Hawzen Senkata Market Trade in specialised markets: Livestock market
	Markets in regional capital	Trade in region capitals (including international trade): Mekele (Tigray Region) Semera (Afar Region) Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

7.1.1 Macro-market participation

Macro-markets are characterised by both formal and informal trade and productive work between rural and small urban centres like Hawzen and Senkata market, and cities like Mekele and Addis Ababa. These markets spaces bridge subsistence agriculture producers with Ethiopia's formal economy for domestic distribution and international export⁶⁴. The country's agricultural sector is supported by small-scale peasant farmers who produce between 'ninety to ninety-five percent (90-95%) of all cereals and oil seeds and ninety-eight (98%) percent of coffee in Ethiopia' (Cherinet and Mulugeta, 2003:12; CSA, 2015b). Petty traders and shop owners purchase their stock for resale in the meso and micro markets in these wholesale macro markets. Further, Hawzen's macro market space is key for the distribution of food-aid and PNSP grain stock to the Kebele. However, accessing urban markets is dependent on available public transport infrastructure and private transport such as; donkeys, camels, motorbikes and cars. Men dominate the transport services between cities, small urban centres and villages, women are therefore in continuous negotiation with men to transport their stock, resources and products between market spaces. This puts women at risk of financial exploitation, verbal abuse, and sometimes physical violence, thus, creating an additional boundary that restricts women from fully participating in the trading markets. This intimidating behaviour of men impacts women's social mobility and personal security in public, below Alemnesh reflects on this phenomenon:

'I am selling potato and tomatoes, I buy from Hawzen and sell them here. If there is a car with potatoes who is loading the car [transportation services], he asks me a lot of money and I say that is not fair then he starts to insult me, it does make me not want to go out' – Alemnesh.

Further, the previous chapter addressed the social taboos that restrict women from purchasing agricultural input resources, fertilizers, seeds and herbicides. These taboos deepen the marginalisation of women in markets. The financial exploitation and market exclusion increase the vulnerability of women to income deprivation. Below are excerpts from Mariem, Kidist and Wezeran explaining where they purchase their stock for their local shops in Koraro's micro-economy:

'I buy my stock in Wukoro' – Mariem.

⁶⁴ Many traders believe that the growing international export market is inflating the price of grain and constricting domestic supply.

‘My husband buys the stock for the shop from Hawzen’ – Kidist.

‘We both go into Hawzen to buy stock for the shop’ – Wezeran

The inter-regional trading in the macro-markets connect Koraro and the surrounding villages to towns and cities across Ethiopia and connects those regions to Koraro through goods and services traded. In the larger towns (Senkata market) and cities (Mekele and Addis Ababa) the market place is permanent with a flow of daily traders the space consists of fixed and transient areas to buy and sell goods. The fixed areas are for small shops selling an array of products from grain, luxury items, durable household products, clothing, small electronics and so forth, other types of enclosed spaces are for storage or a small enclosure sheltered from the environment. Acquiring access to these economic spaces is through the local authority, and these shops are recognised to be formal enterprises. Men are overrepresented in these fixed spaces. Photograph 43 is of two different small shops selling various luxury produce and small durables acquired from other regions in the country and some import items, the photograph to the right is of spices, herbs and various stimulant produce like dagusha seeds and hobbs which is used to make tela.

Photograph 43: Small shops



Photograph 44 below is of a grain merchant with no storefront only space for grain storage. In the image there is a farmer is selling his grain to the merchant, the image displays grain for sale in both large and small quantities. Photograph 45 portrays the difference between a merchant trader and farmer selling directly in the market for the day, the photograph on the

left is of a merchant shop and the photograph on the right is of the farmer. In the merchant's shop there is a selection of pulses for sale, grain stored in the background along with a scale to weigh produce from the farmers. The farmers are selling white and red teff, red teff is a cheaper grain and the quality is said to be poorer than white teff.

Photograph 44: Merchant buying



Photograph 45: Grain trading macro-economy



Transient areas are open spaces usually between fixed spaces or on the side of the road for petty traders and street vendors. Further, farmers who do not have access to an enclosed space and want to sell directly in the market and not to a merchant trader use this space, as seen in photograph 45 above. Women are overrepresented in these spaces, access to transient areas does not require permission from local authorities and trading is recognised as informal. Further, the reproductive obligations of women limit their economic participation in macro-economies to transient spaces, for example, street vendors selling

cooked produce at various intervals during the day can do it after they have finished their household duties. Another example that was provided by the participants, if women need to attend to a problem at home, they can quickly pack-up their goods and leave the market to attend to the problem. This provides further insight into the transient rights of women. Photograph 46 and photograph 47 are of fixed and transient spaces, in photograph 46 women are selling their goods in the middle of the street, and opposite them are men selling their goods in enclosed spaces. Photograph 47 is of two images, the photograph to the left is of a woman selling her grain outside a shop, and in the photograph to the right is of a woman selling her grain while looking after her child outside of a local bar.

Photograph 46: Market trading one



source: (Reggaestory, 2014)

Photograph 47: Market trading two



The marginalisation of women in market spaces is perceived differently between men and women. Men associate the market interactions of women with the household, *domestic-market* trading, women selling to other women, these are feminine trading spaces. This includes the selling of goods and services to men that are an extension of reproductive work such as baked goods and tela. Whereas men associate their market interactions with the wider community and society at large, *wholesale* and *commercial-market* trading men selling to other men, these are masculine trading spaces. Men are overrepresented in wholesale and commercial markets, supplying various industries and other small resale businesses operating within the micro-economies. However, this is not to say that women are not wholesale resellers, although, wholesale reselling in Koraro's local shops is usually done by married couples. Arguably, from the perspective of men the gender division of trade does not marginalise women from participating in market activities, it just sets the boundaries of what is men's trading and what is women's trading. This is juxtaposed with the perspective of women who acknowledge the market restrictions and work within the restrictions to not unsettle social norms. Full access to economic spaces is the ascribed rights of men. The findings align with Paul's (2011) research on marketplaces in Kolkata India. Paul found that 'wholesale markets' were 'indomitably masculine, while smaller retail marketplaces are occupied by a greater proportion of women' thus creating a 'fuzzy identity' of marketplaces (426). Kofi, Layla and Hanna reflect on the gender division of trade in slightly different ways. Kofi's excerpt describes how his wife sells in smaller quantities in the domestic market and how he sells in much larger quantities in the wholesale and commercial market.

'I keep all the produce for selling. My wife sells the produce in the local market on market day. My wife sells maximum 5-kilogram quantities, and I sell in quantities of 25 kilograms and 50 kilograms' – Kofi.

Layla and Hanna better describe the implications of the power dynamics embodied in gendering of market spaces, revealing how the gender division of trade shapes the well-being and agency of women:

'The only difference is the girl cannot trade in the bigger markets [wholesale], she can only sell in her society and sell inside of her home [micro economy]. The ability to work, girls are not breakers to such kind of things they inferior in their community and in other communities too. If I want to sell in Addis Ababa, it is difficult for me, men go to that place and sell where it is productive [profitable], girls cannot do this because of confidence, that limits girls – Layla.

‘It is keeping things sacred and secure in your daily activity, especially in gender, you cannot work where and how you want to. The society gives more priority to boys, although, a woman rises she is still not seen like boys. I can only sell here inside my home this effects my financial status’ – Hanna.

Photograph 48 to photograph 52 below are of women engaging in *domestic-market* trading in transient spaces on the side of the streets outside the small shops and bars. In all the photographs women trade their grain in the same way, on the ground using a cup to measure the amount of grain being sold in small bags that can be easily carried. Photograph 48 is of two images, the image to the left is of men trading their grain in large quantities and the image on the right is of women trading in smaller quantities. In photograph 52 women are holding umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun while selling grain, this was common in the market place.

Photograph 48: Grain trading



Photograph 49: Women trading one



Photograph 50: Women trading two



Photograph 51: Women trading three



Photograph 52: Women trading four



Following-on, inter-regional trade includes specialised trading markets such as the livestock and camel markets. Livestock is fundamental to Ethiopia's economy, contributing 'sixteen-point-five percent (16.5%) of GDP⁶⁵ and thirty-five-point-six percent (35.6%) of the agricultural GDP, fifteen percent (15%) of export earnings and thirty percent (30%) of agricultural employment (Behnke, 2010; Metaferia *et al.*, 2011 cited in Leta and Mesele, 2014:1-2) The sector, directly and indirectly, sustains an estimated eighty percent (80%) of rural livelihoods (ibid). Ethiopia has the 'tenth largest' animal husbandry⁶⁶ stock in the world (USAID, 2013). This space connects peoples from rural to urban areas and the informal to the informal economy, for example, all meat bought and used in restaurants and hotels in Addis Ababa is purchased in the livestock market. The gender division of trade is more visible in specialised trading markets. The camel market is a masculine space where only men trade because the primary use of camels is for transportation. In the Afar region, salt traders use camels to transport the salt mined from the region to Mekele⁶⁷. In the livestock-market men trade livestock associated with agricultural production and animal husbandry. It is not common to see women buying or selling cattle⁶⁸, women from female-headed households will enlist the help of a male relative or friend to assist them with purchasing cattle in the livestock market. Women trade domestic livestock associated with reproductive work; goats, chicken, and other small domestic animals. Although, the area in which women trade domestic livestock is separated from the area where men trade domestic livestock. It is, common for female-headed households to purchase small young goats and chickens to fatten-up for resell at a later stage. However, Koraro's fragile locale poses a risk to animals through droughts and the spread of water-borne diseases. Livestock are an expensive asset and the volatility of Koraro's environment makes domestic animal husbandry a high-risk investment for women. In chapter five Eddel explained the financial risks to her when all her goats died from water-borne diseases in Koraro and how she was unable to repay her micro-finance loan to the Kebele, subsequently, she was arrested. Photograph 53 and photograph

⁶⁵ 'The GDP of livestock related activities valued at 59 billion birr' (Metaferia *et al.*, 2011 cited in Leta and Mesele, 2014:1-2).

⁶⁶ 'Small traders supply hundreds of animals every week to large traders or export abattoirs, as well as to hotels, butchers and live animal retailers in Addis Ababa, Mekelle, Hawasa, Dire Dawa, Adama and other urban centres' (Legese, *et al.*, 2014:28).

⁶⁷ The duration of a round trip is a week.

⁶⁸ Mrs Mengestu (one of my research assistants' mothers) owns a restaurant and bar in Addis Ababa. We attended the Addis Ababa livestock market with her, she expressed that it is extremely uncommon and difficult for women to purchase let alone sell oxen and cattle in the Addis Ababa livestock market. Culturally people from Addis Ababa consider themselves far more progressive with regards to gender-equality than other regions in Ethiopia.

54 are of the Addis Ababa livestock market and photograph 55 of the camel market in Bati, in all three photographs only men can be seen to be trading their livestock. Photograph 56 is of a salt trader transporting his salt to Mekele from the neighbouring Afar region.

Photograph 53: Livestock market one



Photograph 54: Livestock market two



Photograph 55: Camel market in Bati



source: (Tatouf al Mzungu, 2012)

Photograph 56: Camel transport



The macro market also includes services women provide such as cooking (baking injera) and cleaning for hotels in Hawzen. This type of market engagement reflects how women extend their domestic labour into low paying work in small urban centres. Below Mariem describes her work in Hawzen, further her quote provides insight into a strategy used by women to secure finance to start their own businesses in their local communities. The quote also reflects how this strategy enables women to accumulate some financial security by exposing them to formal banking:

I was first a day labourer working in Hawzen, I worked in a hotel – I cooked. I saved my money to start my own business. I save my money in the bank. I saved 500 birr [\$24 USD] per month in my own bank account. I still have my bank account. It was very important for women to have their own bank account then the money can be saved and then after time if they want to create their own business then they have access to their money – Mariem.

Further, another strategy used by women to access financial capital in macro-economic spaces is work through migration. Many women will migrate to neighbouring countries or to the Middle East to work as domestic workers. Lielit a local bar owner in Koraro worked in the Sudan for several years to save enough money to start her small enterprise. International work migration is more common for Ethiopian women than men, however, the capabilities of women to utilise this financial strategy is dependent on their education endowments. This finding aligns with the scholarly work of Fernandez (2011) who found that since the 1990s single educated women from both rural and urban areas of Ethiopia have been migrating abroad in pursuit of domestic work to send remittance home to support their natal

households and to save money for future endeavours. These international labour migration trends provide insight into the transient domestic labour of women. Below Lielit reflects on the international migration trends of women, further her quote highlights the risks to women's personal security while working in foreign countries:

'It is, common for women to migrate for work to different countries. They will work in a family home as a servant. I was thinking to go to the Arab states, but in the Sudan, there is humanity, in the Arab countries there is no humanity. I went with a legal paperwork to the Sudan. I used to send money via western union for my family. I also used to send money with merchants. The western union in Sudan and the one in Addis can send the money to Mekele or Hawzen' – Lielit.

7.1.2 Meso-market participation

The meso-market is characterised by trading between villages on individual market days, agricultural producers, wholesale resellers, and day traders from around the region sell their goods on various market days in different neighbouring villages. Sharing similarities with day-markets in small urban centres, these markets are characterised as inter-community trading, this includes Koraro's nominated market-day. Although, in these market spaces all traders are transient for the day, gendered trading norms are still reproduced in the market place. The engagement of women in this market is still an extension of their reproductive labour. However, the number of traders and the type of produce available is dependent on the harvest and hungry seasons, and the transportation infrastructure to reach the village. Further, because these markets are smaller and localised when compared to the macro-markets, women can respond better to increased market prices. Below Mullu explains how she interacts with the meso-market, further her quote affirms the importance of grain over cash:

'When I run out of sugar, soap, coffee, I make a rough calculation. I know how much a kilo of grain is, like for teff and the maize. I will calculate how much money I need for soap and clothings. I will calculate this, and then I measure some grain from my store and sell it at the local market. When they make their things more expensive, we make our grain more expensive. There is different types of grains, so when the market gets more expensive for things, we take our more expensive grain to sell' – Mullu.

At the time of this study, Koraro's market day was on Wednesdays, villages within proximity to one another try to ensure their market days occur on different days to one another.

Market days provide the local community with access to goods that are not always locally available in the micro-economy, and it is an important trading day for Koraro's home-enterprises particularly tela houses and bars. Photograph 57 and photograph 58 are of Dugum's market day, these photographs reflect the extension of the hungry season, there were not many traders selling their produce at the market. The produce being sold were primarily for domestic consumption and in low quantities; food and vegetable oil.

Photograph 59 and photograph 60 are of the marketplaces in other rural villages, in both spaces, there is some infrastructure for traders to use when compared to Dugum and Koraro's market place in photograph 61. In photograph 59 there are tables for traders to sell their produce and products on along with support to enclose the above area with a sheet of plastic to protect against the weather. In photograph 60 there are only support structures to enclose the area with plastic.

Photograph 57: Dugum market-day one



Photograph 58: Dugum market-day two



Photograph 59: Community market place one



Photograph 60: Community market place two



Photograph 61: Koraro market place



Further, market days are also a social-affair strengthening social capital between female-headed households locally and in other villages. Women will socialise with each other during the coffee ceremony hosting one another in their homes on alternative market days. Men will socialise with each other in local bars and tela houses, it is not common for women to socialise together in these public spaces. While in Dugum a participant's child from Koraro was staying in Dugum for the weekend, her mother was in Mekele acquiring stock for the tela house. Female-headed household social networks transcends community boundaries. Below Zenaye's, Nigesti and Kidist describe their social interactions on market day:

'I usually don't socialise much with people from the community. I only socialise when I go to the market, I will contact one of my neighbours' – Zenaye.

'I only socialise in my house when there is the market' – Nigesti.

'Sometimes my friends and I will talk outside in the market, but mostly we will come inside. The coffee ceremony is a special thing for women to come together' – Kidist.

Comparable, to market-day trading in the meso-economy, market spaces in larger towns and cities, are significant spaces for women to interact with one another while selling or purchasing household goods. However, instead of socialising with one another in private homes, there are designated *women-only public coffee-houses* located in various side alleys in the market. These spaces are blacked-out structures concealed from public view for women to utilise, this is juxtaposed with the open street facing public bars of men to utilise. This provides further insight into the masculine-feminine space dichotomy and the transient rights of women engaging with public spaces. These public coffee-houses are feminised spaces and men are not permitted to enter them without permission. This social taboo restricting men from accessing a feminine space also provides women with more security and privacy. Further, these are important spaces for women to accumulate social networks outside of their kin group and local community. Photograph 62 below is of two images, the photograph to the left is of a *public coffee-house* in a side-alley in Mekardo Addis Ababa with blacked-out windows and curtain covering the entrance. The photograph to the right is of a local bar facing the street of the market, open-plan and light.

Photograph 62: Coffee house and bar



7.1.3 Micro-market participation

Micro-markets are characterised by productive and non-remunerated work that supports the local subsistence and informal sector through farm and nonfarm enterprises, this includes work provided through the Productive Safety Net Programme. The informal sector absorbs individuals and households who are unable to participate in the formal sector. A small section of Koraro's micro-economy comprises of formal employment however, these jobs are extremely scarce and are closely tied to education attainment levels. None of the participants were employed⁶⁹ in Koraro's formal sector and according to two participants, these jobs are usually filled by skilled workers from Hawzen or Mekele. Most women are concentrated in the informal sector and according to the CSA labour surveys (2014b)⁷⁰ the data indicates that there is a feminisation of informal labour in relation to formal labour. the Ethiopian government defines the informal sector as:

⁶⁹ Employed Population: 'Accordingly, the employed population is defined as those persons who are engaged in productive activity at least one hour or more during the seven days prior to the survey date. Persons who had regular jobs or business or holdings to return to but absent from work (i.e., not at work or worked less than one hour) for various reasons are also considered as employed persons' (CSA, 2014b:64).

⁷⁰ According to the Ethiopian National Labour Force Survey (2014): 52.1% of the country's productive age are aged between fifteen-and sixty-four years-old; 44% of the country's total population are children aged fifteen and younger; and, 3.5% are sixty-five and above (CSA, 2014b).

‘...home based or individual establishment /activity operated by the owner with few or no employees. They are for the most part unregistered and operating on a very small scale and with a low level of organization. Most of them have very low level of productivity and income. They tend to have little or no access to organized markets, to credit institutions, to modern technology, to formal training and to many public services and amenities.

A large number of them are carried out without fixed location or in places such as small shops, outlets or home-based activities. They are not recognized, supported or regulated by the government. They are beyond social protection, labour legislation and protective measures at the workplace activities comprise what has now come to be called the Informal Sector’ (CSA, 2004:1).

The above sections addressed the interdependent relationship between the micro, meso and macro economies which form the foundation of the informal economy. Koraro’s micro-market trading focuses on daily intra-community trading in small establishments and various home-based enterprises. Koraro’s small non-remunerated work sector comprises of the volunteer economy: health-extension workers; agricultural-extension workers; and community extension workers⁷¹. The volunteer economy requires some skilled labour, people who work in this sector also volunteer in the surrounding villages the meso-economy, as skilled labour is scarce. Three of the participants were a part of the volunteer economy as health and community extension workers. However, two of the participants were illiterate and required assistance from their children to carry out their duties as community extension workers. It is, female-headed households who lend their support to the volunteer economy, this contributes to the findings in chapter five that women accumulate social capital through various volunteer organisations⁷². Further, located behind all Koraro’s economic layers is the feminised unpaid reproductive and care economy. Table 9 below tabulates the various

⁷¹ I have grouped all other volunteers working in various areas outside of agriculture and health as community extension workers, these include but are not limited to, the Green Movement, Five-for-Five, Women’s Association.

⁷² The MVP is also dependent on the volunteer economy to meet the projects objectives, particularly on agricultural and health extension workers. According to a financial review by McCord, *et al.*, (2013) researchers from the Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, USA apart of the Millennium Village Project. MVP health extension workers get paid an average monthly salary of eighty dollars US (\$80.00 USD) across ten of their MVP sites. However, according to the participants at the time of study, health extension workers did not get pay a monthly salary, although, in the absence of available data from the MVP, it is, not possible to reject or support their claims.

livelihood groups and the source of their productive income and in which markets they are actively involved.

Table 9: Livelihood groups

<i>Livelihood groups</i>	<i>Productive income</i>	<i>Micro</i>	<i>Meso</i>	<i>Macro</i>
Agriculture	Farming	√	√	√
	Livestock	√	√	√
	Agricultural wage labour	√	√	
	Sharecropping	√		
Small business/self-employed (<i>not run from home</i>)	Small retail shops	√	√	
	Bars	√	√	
Home-enterprise (<i>small business/self-employed</i>)	Handicrafts/artisan	√	√	√
	Selling baked goods	√	√	√
	Tela house	√	√	
	Tela house and bar	√	√	
	Traditional healer	√	√	
Rental income	House	√		
	Room	√		
Day traders	Market day trading	√	√	
	Petty trading	√	√	
Productive safety net programme	Day labourer (able-bodied)	√		
	Direct support	√		
Dependency	Dependent on relative	√		
	Food Aid	√		
Formal employment (<i>salary/wage labour</i>)	Government: Kebele, School, clinic	√		
	NGO	√		
	Private sector	√		
Volunteer sector (no income)	Health extension worker	√	√	
	Agricultural extension worker	√	√	
	Community extension worker	√	√	

Chapter five explored the role of the Productive Safety Net Programme with respect to food insecurity and the recovery strategies of female-headed households. Following on from this, women experience the programme's public works initiative differently to men, by examining their involvement in the programme provides for deeper insight into the gender relations of productive work. Aligning with the work of Chant (2007) productive spaces are masculine spaces where men accumulate social, symbolic and productive capitals (165). Here, access to the road construction and agricultural works initiatives is acquired through social relations with Kebele members, and the women who gain access to the initiatives are financially exploited by the men. The men of the community hold stronger social capital with the Kebele, the Kebele selects who can participate and the duration of their participation. Below, Wubit explains the selection process and reflects on her lower social status for reason why she is marginalised from the initiatives. Further, her quote contributes to the findings of the previous chapters that access to essential *first-generation* assets is dependent on the relationships with members of the Kebele:

‘There is a group that selects people to work for the collecting the sand. Because, I don't have social status and I don't have any family in the Kebele, the Kebele members place only their family members and friends in the jobs – Wubit’.

In road construction, community members will fill bags with sand to be transported to various sites along the road where others are mixing the cement. People are arranged into a selection of groups working on alternate days⁷³ arranged on a week-to-week rotation system. However, the rota system is inconsistent⁷⁴, this is problematic for women who need to prearrange child care with their neighbours for those days in the week. Further, women are financially exploited by the men they work with, in female-only groups filling the sandbags the truck drivers demand that the women pay them to load the bags or else they will drive away without their loads. In mixed groups, women must pay the men to help them load the sandbags into the truck before the driver leaves. Yohanna and Wubit reflect on these phenomena in their groups revealing the reproduction of gender relations in different spaces:

⁷³ One group will work Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the other group will work the alternate days.

⁷⁴ This is because the PSNP is structured as either five days' public works per month or a cap of twenty-five days over six months.

‘If the group is all girls and need help to fill the car quickly they pay the men 50 birr [\$2.50 USD] each – Yohanna’.

‘The men in the group say we must to pay them for loading the bags, you want to work equally, but us men have to work harder if we have to lift women’s bags, we have no choice the driver wants to fill the car quickly – Wubit’.

Wubit continues explaining this phenomenon from a different perspective after the groups were paid for their work at the end of the year, however she contrasts the behaviour of men with the behaviour of women. This provides insight into the ascribed rights of men in the community that go unchallenged, and that reciprocity is structured differently between men and women:

‘There is a ledger of the credit saving institution, there was 90,000 birr [\$4,500 USD], we split between three groups, there is 30 people in a group [1,000 birr per person - \$50 USD]. The government ordered everyone in the group to buy a solar system and a special stove. There was some conflict in the group because the women were not able to carry the equipment to car, so the men in the group told us to pay 15 birr [\$0.75 USD] for loading the stuff in the car. But, if he comes into my house, I will give him coffee and won’t ask him to pay. There is no kindness in the men to help us lifting our stuff but they expect us to give them coffee – Wubit’

The above findings suggest that providing women with access to productive work opportunities does not unsettle gender norms but, can further embed them into the socio-cultural practices of the community. Photograph 63 is of a mixed sand collection group, in the image there is only one woman working with a group of men. Photograph 64 is of a cement mixing group, these are smaller groups, photograph 65 is of the road construction extending beyond Koraro towards Wukoro and photograph 66 is of the agricultural works.

Photograph 63: Collecting sand for road construction



Photograph 64: Mixing cement for road construction



Photograph 65: Road under construction



Photograph 66: Agricultural works programme



source: (Millennium Promise, 2010)

7.2 Home enterprises

Chapter six examined the strategies of women to acquire access to shelter, aligning with the work of Moser (2007;2009) the findings suggest that the conversion of shelters into an essential productive asset is a social phenomenon shared by the poor in both urban and rural areas. This is a fundamental livelihood strategy of female-headed households to economically participate in micro, meso and macro market spaces without unsettling gender norms. However, participation is relative to economic endowments of the household; physical and productive assets, household labour, education attainment and social networks. Home enterprises are an economic adaption of various *first-generation* capital assets into another fundamental *first-generation* capital asset – income. This research separates home enterprises into two categories; private and public. Private enterprises are economic spaces that manufacture goods and services at are sold outside of the household. Public enterprises are economic spaces that manufacture goods and services that are sold inside the household. Closely associated with home enterprises are nonfarm enterprises, not all nonfarm enterprises are home enterprises, however, all home enterprises are categorised as nonfarm enterprises. The World Bank (2009) found that twenty-five percent of rural households are actively engaged in nonfarm enterprises:

‘The main manufacturing activity is home brewing and distilling of alcohol, followed by the textile businesses, mainly dominated by weaving. In the service sector the sale of food and beverages dominates, as one-half of services are composed of hotel, restaurant and bar services; followed by community services, such as sewage, disposal, and sanitation activities; transportation; and hairdressing’ (21).

The ERSS⁷⁵ found that one in five households in rural areas and small towns have one or more nonfarm enterprises. However, as anticipated, nonfarm enterprises are more common in small towns than rural areas, with over ‘half of all households in small towns engaged in nonfarm businesses’ (42). Table 10 below lists the percentage of rural and small-town households engaged in nonfarm enterprise livelihoods. Nineteen-point-two percent (19.2%) of Tigray’s rural areas and small towns comprise of small nonfarm enterprises; of that, eight-point-nine percent (8.9%) are engaged in some type of business or service from either a home enterprise or small shop; three percent (3%) sell

⁷⁵ Ethiopia Rural Socioeconomic Survey.

processed foods and tela; four-point-nine percent (4.9%) are petty traders in market spaces (ibid).

Table 10: Percentage of nonfarm enterprises

	Any Nonfarm Enterprise	Non-agri. Business/ services from home /shop	Pro-cessed agri. Products (flour tela injera..)	Trading business on a street or in a market	Fire-wood charcoal	Professional	Taxi/pick-up truck	Bar/restaurant	Other small business
Tigray	19.2	8.9	3	4.9	0.4	0.4	0	0.3	2.9
Amhara	16.4	5.9	5.5	2.6	2.4	0	0.3	0.1	1.3
Oromiya	16.1	6.1	5.9	2.3	1.2	0.3	0.2	0	1.7
SNNP	24.7	3.5	6.7	11.4	2.3	0.3	0.4	0.1	5.2
Other Regions	32.7	9.9	6.1	3	6.4	0.3	0.2	0.8	10.2
All	19.4	5.8	5.8	4.9	2	0.2	0.3	0.1	3
Rural	19.1	5.6	5.7	4.9	2	0.2	0.3	0.1	3
Small Towns	55.6	24.1	14.4	12.5	2.9	0.4	1	2.5	7.3

source: (CSA, 2013:43)

Six of the participants run private home enterprises, these include purchasing agriculture produce and livestock from the wholesale markets for resell in the meso-markets and selling cooked food (injera) and artisan crafts in the macro-markets. The manufacturing capabilities of artisan crafts like basket weaving are shaped by Koraro's ecology, these are made from grass. Further, the poor transport infrastructure addressed above and in the previous chapters impact the supply and distribution chains. One strategy used by women trading in artisan crafts is to send their products with other women who sell their goods in macro-markets. This further contributes to the importance of social networks between women in their local communities and other areas. Below are excerpts from Letgebriel describing where and how she sells her products:

'I send my crafts with other girls to Mekele to sell. I didn't have to pay for transportation to the girls. We have a kind of arrangement' – Letgebriel.

Public home enterprises include small shops, hairdressers and tela houses, these enterprises sell in the local economy. These economic spaces are open to the public making them different from private home enterprises. However, the type of access to the public depends on what is being sold. Small shops do not use the entire household space, typically trading takes place in the front section of the home which is separated by a partition and the

customers do not enter the space. Photograph 67 below is of two shops selling different produce, the shop to left is selling luxury items (coffee, sugar, salt, popcorn), clothes and various small household products. The shop to the right sells grain, in both images the partitions are visible, and the stock is enclosed behind a door creating a physical boundary with the public. The other type of shop the customer can enter the trading space but, the domestic part of the house is separated by a door and has a separate entrance from the back of the house. These are in larger houses that hold a lot of stock and are run by married couples. Only one of the participants provided hairdressing services in her home, however, these are women-only services and are done in conjunction with other types of productive work, below Yehudit explains that she runs two types of public home enterprises hairdressing and a tela-house.

‘I am a hairdresser and on Saturday I sell tela. Hairdressing is dependent on when women want their hair done. The average is they come twice per month. Hair dressing is not very clean, you can pick up other people’s hair under your nails and it can fall into your food’ – Yehudit.

Photograph 67: Local shops Koraro



7.2.1 Tela house

The most common public home enterprise run by female-headed households in Koraro are tela houses, seventy-five per cent (75%) of the female-headed household sample in this study run a tela house and two of them sold tela in their bars – these bars are separate

spaces and are not a public home enterprise⁷⁶. The production of traditional beer is an extension of the reproductive responsibilities of women, tela is widely consumed in Orthodox communities and fundamental during times of celebration.

‘...it is traditional for women to make tela...’– Nigesti’.

To advertise a tela-house a plastic bag is tied around a stick in front of the house, this can be seen in photograph 4, photograph 6 and photograph 12 in chapter five. Further, it is the primary source of income for most female-headed households in Koraro, below Abeba, Eddel, Jalene, Mullu and Konijt reflect on the lack of economic opportunities available to the women of Koraro and how selling tela is their only option for an income. Further, Abeba reflects on the limited access to micro-finance loans and how men can work in other market spaces:

‘There are no job opportunities that is relative to girls, so they are involved in making and selling tela. Women can sell what they would like in the community but there is a limitation, women are limited in money and there is a scarcity in money. They just can make money selling tela and alcohol, it is profitable business if there is allot of customers, you can benefit from selling alcohol and tela. But, in the community it is becoming more difficult to sell tela because more women are doing it. Men are able to work outside of this community, but the women only have the opportunity to sell tela’ – Abeba.

‘They have no choice at all, they do not have enough opportunities, work opportunities, so they are just decide to sell tela in their house because there is not enough opportunities or choices – Eddel’.

‘Women are living around here because they can work here by selling tela and luxury foods – Jalene’.

‘Most of the women in the community are selling tela, but some of the womens will sell beers - in a hotel. A hotel is a place that sells beers, soft drinks, and alcohol’ – Mullu.

‘... I make and sell local beer in my house, 5 people will come on a Wednesday, it’s the only income for the entire house...– Konjit.

⁷⁶ Based on the estimated number of households (170) in Koraro village, the tela houses in this sample represents 14% of all households in Koraro.

Although the material costs of tela are low, it is labour intensive and has health-related risks. On average, the production process of tela takes about five days⁷⁷, excluding the time needed to accumulate the necessary local resources. Chapter five examined how Koraro's ecology increases the reproductive labour burdens of women particularly for women dependent on Koraro's natural resources for productive purposes; water and fuel-wood. Further, many of the participants reported an increase in health-related problems since they started to make tela regularly, these were headaches, problems with vision and eye infections, and difficulties in breathing. The manufacturing processes exacerbate the poor health of women who annually experience seasonal nutrition deprivation. Below Abeba describes her symptoms:

‘When I make tela, I feel sometimes headaches, pain in my eyes and even breathing is difficult – Abeba’.

The health-related findings were confirmed by the Women's Association in Hawzen, further selling tela increases the risks to women's personal security, this is addressed in more detail in the following section. Tela is stored in either twenty or fifty-litre containers and it has a short shelf-life limiting the number of days the product can be stored. Table 11 below records the quantities of tela sold in different tela-houses, the varying cup sizes impact the overall profit margins.

Table 11: Tela sales

CUP SIZE & COST	20L CONTAINER	VALUE IN US \$	50L CONTAINER	VALUE IN US \$
500ml 1 birr	40 cups	-	100 cups	-
	40 birr	\$2.00	100 birr	\$5.00
800ml 2 birr	25 cups	-	63*(rounded up)	-
	50 birr	\$2.50	126 birr	\$6.30
1000ml 2 birr	20 cups	-	50 cups	-
	40 birr	\$2.00	100 birr	\$5.00

⁷⁷ The first day, the seeds used to make tela are ground into flour using a large pestle and mortar. The grinding process is time consuming and strenuous. The flour is baked on a traditional stove using fire wood releasing large amounts of smoke that can cause damage to the eyes and the lungs. The second day, the baked flour is placed into a large container to start the fermentation process. The third day, water and traditional additives (a seed dagusha) are added to the baked flour. The four day, more water is added to the baked flour and left for another day to further ferment.

Most women sell tela once or twice a week, however, there are some women who sell tela every day, but this is the exception to the norm. Women can sell between fifty to one-hundred litres of tela on market day this has an estimated income value between \$5.00 USD and \$10.00 USD, or they sell around fifty litres over two days. Market-day is the most profitable day, however, the market in Koraro is becoming saturated with tela houses, and women are concerned about overproduction when demand is low. Strategically, women sell tela on different days to increase their market share, except for market-day. However, the above sections examined the importance of market day for women reproductively and socially. To not lose household income on market day, other female household members will sell tela while their mother is out, or if there is a shortage of household labour woman will ask their neighbours for the help of their daughters or nieces. This further highlights the importance of social capital between female-headed households. Below is an excerpt from Amit describing how she helps her mother sell tela on market day, Amit's quote also reveals the behaviour of her mother acknowledging the value of Amit's labour by paying her:

'I help my mother to sell tela when she is at the market, my mom encourages me to save my money in the bank, my mom gives me 18 birr [\$0.90 USD] per month for helping her' – Amit.

The consumption of tela is shaped by Koraro's ecology and farming seasons. The drought had depressed the sales of tela, fewer men were trading their produce on market-day, there was a reduction of seasonal farm labour in the area as crops failed, therefore, fewer day labourers were coming into the village. Further, the drought reduced overall income of the men in the village. The economy of tela in Koraro is dependent on male patrons, tela houses are local masculine spaces for the men of the community, this finding aligns with the scholarly work of Hathaway (1996) on traditional bars in Nigeria being masculine spaces. This provides deeper insight into the community entitlements of female-headed households suggesting that selling tela is an economic entitlement of women as its production is an extension of their reproductive labour, however, the utilisation of the tela house is the right of men. This suggests that the income endowments of tela sellers are transient to the social entitlements of men. Tekle, Abeba, Konjit and Nigesti describe selling Tela in Koraro, Tekle and Abeba reflect on market saturation, Abeba and Konjit reveal how selling tela impacts their psychological well-being from a financial perspective:

'I sell tela on Tuesdays. At the bottom of the village, a lot of women sell tela, but up here not too many women sell Tela, around 8 women' – Tekle.

‘It is seasonal, I make tela, sometimes people come and drink and sometimes no one comes. If no one comes I throw the tela away. I don’t mind selling tela but when the market decreases, when I don’t sell much tela I get stressed. The tela keeps for about 2 days – Abeba’.

It is only men who come to buy the beer, mostly it is the community but sometimes if there is a special ceremony here if they are observing the flag or for the market they will come. If they are paying their moneys I feel happy. Its good’ – Konjit.

‘The men in community come to drink tela at my house. Sometimes when the farmers from the surrounding neighbourhood come to sell their stuff in the market they will come and drink tela here – Nigesti’.

Photograph 68 below is of a participant’s daughter selling tela on market day while looking after her two younger sisters, her friend was with her carrying her sibling on her back. The other children in the photograph are the neighbour’s children who are being looked after by the two older girls while their mothers are at the market together.

Photograph 68: Tela house



Following on from above, the economic entitlements of tela are not the right of all women, selling tela intersects with household headship and marital status. Women do not have the same household rights in male-headed households, it is the right of men to sanction how the space is utilised. These findings further align with Chant’s (2016) argument that female-

headed households are portable assets increasing women's agency and financial autonomy. Below Yehudit and Mebrhit reflect on their experience of intimate partner violence when they were married and tried to sell tela. Both excerpts reveal the severity of the violence, Yehudit's ex-husband was arrested and charged for assault, Mebrhit feared for her life. The quotes highlight the use of violence to exert control over the behaviour of women further aligning with Kabeer's (2005) power-over argument:

'My ex-husband and I had big conflict when I was selling tela, because I was making more money than him. He would say I cannot sell tela, I called the police and they have charged him to go to court – Yehudit'.

'The security here do nothing, when I start to sell Tela, my husband said no one can come into the house while he is here, he would get crazy and he told me I must stop selling, I was very scared for my life, he could kill me – Mebrhit'.

Violence against women is a 'manifestation of the power imbalance' embodied in unequal gender relations, it is 'not random, accidental or a private matter, but structural' (Chinkin, 1995:42). Although female-headed households are free from intimate partner violence, tela houses are public masculine spaces that increase women's risks to verbal abuse, and physical and sexual assault. The behaviour of men in public spaces is reproduced in tela houses, the previous chapters addressed the risks to women and girls when they are in public spaces. This behaviour reproduction is what Gregson and Rose (2000:433) refer to this as *performed spaces* that negotiate and reproduce gender relations as stated in (van Blerk, 2011). Tela houses provide for deeper insight into the reproduction of gender relations, it is common for men to touch women without their consent and humiliate them in public. This behaviour impacts the psychological well-being of women, making women feel uncomfortable and intimated when they are in public spaces, sometimes this behaviour leads to women being sexually assaulted by men. Below, Lielit reflects on the behaviour of men in tela houses and in public how this makes her feel, she goes on to explain sometimes the men will play games with each other by seeing what things they can get her to do. Mebriht's excerpt reveals the risk of sexual assault:

'The girls who sell tela out of their homes don't feel secure. Some mens consider the ability of the girl who is selling alcohol, they will start saying things to her. They express their personal feelings...

...it is, common for men to touch you. I feel very uncomfortable when they touch me, I feel at the time weird, they start touching me, holding my hand. You feel weird inside when they try hold my hand, but I don't say anything to them...

‘...some of the guys ask the girls to drink with them and use her as a pawn in their game with his friends. This makes the girls feels inferior... if mens insults me, I feel in a bad manner, I don’t know if other women feel that way’ – Lielit.

‘...the men think they can do what they want, we can lock our doors they can break in and have sex with us if they want...’ – Mebrhit.

Rugu reflects on the violent behaviour of a man who had a romantic interest in her and was a frequent customer, one evening he arrived at her tela house drunk and started to violently act out, further, her quote also describes the behaviour of the local police:

‘...he tried to break the bed, he went crazy, but he didn’t touch us, he break bottles of beers, he acted like a devil. The reason why he didn’t do anything to us I kept quiet. There is doubts about the police community - during that evening there were policemen, but they did nothing, only watched the drama unfold. The police here are simple and they do nothing at all...’ – Rugu

Tela house are also spaces where aggressive behaviour between men increases through alcohol consumption, men will fight with each other regularly damaging fragile household assets. Further, men will actively use tela houses as space to resolve personal grievances with one another, Lielit continues below with this description:

‘...if someone gets into tela house, bars, he becomes bothered and reveals what he feels and thinks to his enemy, he goes to look to his enemy, it is natural gift, when they start drinking, they change...’ – Lielit

Women try to manage the risks by stopping to sell tela after a certain time, this is usually later in the afternoon when the violent behaviour of men increases into the evening, whereby women are further disempowered through the violent behaviour of men. However, many women must sell all their tela to prevent stock wastage and loss of income. The capability to control trading times is relative to the income status of the household. The participants said that the violent behaviour is more prevalent in the tela houses around the market place, in the area they refer to as the central part of the village. Although women will call the local police to intervene, the police don’t do much and no charges are brought against the men. The findings suggest that tela houses increase the risks to women’s overall well-being, which increases their vulnerability to health deprivation. Below Saba, Konjit, Rekik and Abeba describe the aggressive and violent behaviour of men in their public home enterprises, Saba’s how evening trading increases the risks to her personal safety. Konijt and Rekik reveal their need to contact the village security, and Abeba reflects on the damage

caused to her household assets. Further, Abeba's quote reveals that she is held responsible for any damage done by her patrons to someone else's property, regardless if the person knows who is responsible for damaging their property. This further contributes to findings of the ascribed responsibilities of women:

'People get drunk often, and they will fight in my house, first verbally and then it increases to physical violence. I start at 8am and I close at 5pm. The reason is because they become very drunk, and when I ask them to leave, they will not, and they begin to insult me – that's why I stop selling at 5pm. Once it becomes dark they must leave, because it becomes too dangerous – Saba'.

'...but sometimes there is an occasion when the men get drunk and start fighting with one another. I call security or police men, if they are not willing to stop...' – Konijt.

'We start selling at 8am until the tela is finished. It usually finishes at 2am. They fight in my house, then we have to call the police – Rekik'.

'I have had experience of conflict in my house when I am selling tela, they drink, and they were enemies, and they fought, broke my glasses and phone in my house. They broke the phone which was someone else's and now he is telling me I have to replace it, 2,000 birr [\$100 USD], he knows the people with the conflict – Abeba'.

7.3 Conclusion

The chapter investigated how the gender division of labour shapes the economic participation of women in the rural economy with respect to the gender division of trade, and how this informs the livelihood strategies of female-headed households. The chapter found that the private-public space dichotomy embedded in gender roles and relations marginalises the participation of women in macro, meso and micro economic spaces. Further, the evidence suggests that the type of trading, and where the trading takes place is a better indicator of women's vulnerability to income privation than the fact that they trade. The productive capabilities of women are shaped by their access to economic assets, social capital and the market exchange conditions. The chapter found that Koraro's poorly developed transportation infrastructure increases the vulnerability of women to income deprivation.

The evidence suggests that the reproductive rights and obligations of women limit their economic participation in macro-economies to transient spaces excluding them from

profitable wholesale markets and from specialised trading markets i.e. the livestock trade. The chapter found that the engagement of women in the inter-community trading markets was an extension of their domestic trading in the macro-markets. The evidence suggests that women can better respond to market price increases by increasing the price of their goods traded in the community markets. The chapter found that market days are essential to strengthening social capital between women and that the social networks of women extend into the surrounding communities and urban centres.

The chapter found that rural women convert their households into essential productive assets, and this is a fundamental economic livelihood strategy of female-headed households. The evidence suggests that the most common home enterprise of female-headed households are tela houses, these are an economic conversion of women's reproductive labour entitlements. The chapter found that the behaviour of men in public spaces is reproduced in tela houses and the rights of women in these spaces are transient to the social entitlements of men. Although selling tela increases household income, it also increases women's risks to violence and abuse impacting their overall social well-being and increasing their vulnerability to health deprivation.

The following chapter eight will present the contributions of this research to the feminisation of poverty thesis and the gender and development discourse. The chapter will review the limitations of the research findings and offer suggestions for future research and development.

Chapter Eight: The Feminisation of Vulnerability to Poverty

8 Introduction

This chapter pulls together the thesis and comprises a number of elements: restatement of the *aims and objectives*, including reflection on how well the aim and objectives have been met; outline of the *theoretical approach* adopted; the *research design* employed including an acknowledgement of weaknesses; a summary of findings; contribution to knowledge; and further research.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge in three respects, offering fresh ways of considering the challenges and prospects of women, especially female-headed households in fragile ecological environments. First, uniquely, this study was carried out in a rural environment, where inhabitants are at constant risk of drought or flood, facing famine and/or other privations. Fragile rural environments such as that studied here offer the potential of exploring how communities cope with minimal natural resources and how this affects livelihood strategies. This study highlights these coping strategies, especially those of women, and of female-headed households. The work of both Chant and Moser provide a valuable base on which this research builds. However, both focus on urban and not rural environments. This research offers new insight into the vulnerability of women to poverty in ecologically fragile rural areas. This research contributes by deepening insights to existing bodies of work. This study contributes to a new way of thinking about women's - especially female-headed households' - place in rural communities of undeveloped economies. This contribution opens up the potential of exploring the transient nature of women's entitlements and obligations.

The transient nature of women's entitlements and obligations; transience is a state of impermanence, and this research suggests that women living in challenging rural environments (environmentally, economically, and socially) experience daily life as mix of ephemeral entitlements and increasing obligations. The nature of this transient phenomenon has both spatial and temporal dimensions. Temporally, transient entitlements and obligations seem to evolve over their life time, as women transform from girls, from single to married, from married to divorced, from so-called dependent wife to independent agent, finally to respected grandmother. Evidence from this research suggests women's accrual of social capital and agency does not begin until marriage, and crucially upon becoming a mother. They begin to experience the precariousness of their social and

economic security; an experience they probably are able to anticipate as a young unmarried woman and are fatalistic about the fact they will move to this position as night follows day. Spatially, women experience this transience in different ways as they move through the various stages of their lives, from unmarried girl to female-headed household. This research offers evidence of how women engage with this transient life, through their livelihood strategies. While women must be inventive in creating income opportunities to support their household, and build social acceptance and legitimacy, they must at the same time accept that ex-husbands continue to have rights over the lives of the children even if they have abandoned their children.

This transience must be understood in relation to the entitlements and obligations of men of that community. Evidence shows that men abandon their children, leaving the mother to carry the burden of bringing them up. Women accept these arrangements partly because it is traditionally accepted, and partly because as mothers they have an innate biological and emotional drive to protect their offspring. Elements of transience can be seen through the contributions presented below in the following section.

8.1 Research aim and objectives

Broadly taking a livelihoods perspective to poverty, this research examines how gendered *entitlements and obligations* (within the household), and *socio-cultural practices*, contribute to the vulnerability of women to poverty in general, and to the vulnerability of female headed households in particular, all set in the context of an ecologically fragile rural community. Here, female-headed households are seen as active economic agents, employing a variety of survival strategies (livelihood strategies), while facing numerous socio-cultural and environmental challenges.

Entitlements refer to the claim and control over resources and obligations refer to socially determined responsibilities. In this research socio-cultural practices refer to social customs, beliefs, values and language that shape a person's identity and reality. This includes social engagement in a variety of roles with others in a domestic setting, including interpersonal roles with family members and kinship, and community roles, such as participation in organisations and religious events.

This aim is explored through close examination of its constituent elements, presented as three inter-related research objectives around the role of (in order): the ecological environment; the role of gendered entitlements and obligations on women's livelihood strategies; and the influence of socio-cultural practices on women's economic participation. The objectives are in turn broken down into two overlapping questions: a) all women, and b) female headed households. The primary focus is on the latter but recognises that the issues raised apply to all women in general.

Objective 1: To examine the relationship between the ecological landscape and female headed households' vulnerability to poverty. Here the ecological landscape refers to the characteristics of a particular geographic locale, external shocks (environmental, economic, social and political), and macrosocial institutional arrangements. The objective therefore introduces two inter-related questions:

- c) how does the ecological landscape shape the vulnerability of all women to poverty? and,
- d) what are the coping strategies of female headed households to sustain external shocks?

Objective 2: To examine the socio-cultural practices that shape the allocation of entitlements and obligations within the household and community, and in particular how these promote the vulnerability to poverty of female headed households. This objective is addressed by close examination of the ascribed entitlements and obligations of women with respect to the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community entitlements. From this two questions emerge:

- c. how do ascribed entitlements and obligations shape all women's sense of agency and well-being? additionally,
- d. how do ascribed entitlements and obligations inform the livelihood strategies of female headed households?

Objective 3: To examine how the socio-cultural practices shape the economic participation (i.e. work) of women in the wider community. This objective introduces two questions:

- a. what work all women are entitled to do? additionally,
- b. how does this shape the livelihood strategies of female headed households?

8.1.1 Reflecting on the aim and objectives

Koraro village was selected to be the case study of this research because of several factors that were already known about the village that pre-established it was an ecologically fragile community. Its participation in the Millennium Development Village Project (MVP) was the initial reason for its selection, the programme had chosen some of the poorest and most vulnerable villages prone to droughts and famine to take part in their project. Further, Ethiopia was of interest because of its known gender-inequalities and the availability of research data. Koraro's location provided for some limitations for the study; the obvious being the amount of time that was feasible in the field, therefore that required focus on a selection of variables that informed the ecological landscape of this research. Chapter five addressed the key environmental drivers that shape Koraro's ecology food insecurity and coping strategies, and the role of the government in food security. The chapter could therefore only provide insights on some features of the ecological landscape. Chapter six was the most in-depth chapter to explore objective two, the rural focus of the research provides for insights on the ascribed entitlements and obligations of women from the perspective of rural women. How these shape women's agency and well-being was addressed throughout the chapter with respect to certain aspects of the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community. Given the size and depth of each of these social-institutions it is not possible to address everything. Further, the chapter addressed land and housing as part of the evaluation of the livelihood strategies of female-headed households with respect to their entitlements and obligations. Chapter seven explored objective three, providing insights on the economic participation of rural women and the livelihood strategies of female headed households.

8.2 Theoretical approach

The overarching theoretical approach used to interrogate the aim of this research sits at the intersection of feminist, poverty and development theory. This research draws on the feminisation of poverty thesis put forward by feminist scholars with a focus on the work of Chant (1997; 2007; 2008; 2010; 2016), the capabilities approach to poverty developed by Sen (1981;1987;1999), and the extension of his work by Kabeer (1994;1999;2003;2005) and Moser (1993;1998;2007;2009;2010;2016) in her [multi-dimensional] asset accumulation framework. Chant's approach to the feminisation of poverty - referred to as the feminisation

of responsibility or obligation (in urban areas) - offers a dynamic view of overall household contributions of women relative to their time, labour, and income, juxtaposed with their overall household rights, rewards and freedoms. The contentious debate in the poverty and development literature as to how poverty is defined provides an array of conceptual approaches to gender and poverty. This research uses Moser's urban [multi-dimensional] asset accumulation framework to interrogate the interrelated social processes to asset accumulation which is an amalgamation of gender, assets, vulnerability and empowerment. In the asset and livelihood literature the various frameworks are designed to be both analytical and operational, in order to make them actionable within development policy. Keeping loosely within an asset-accumulation framework this research focuses on the socio-cultural practices of the household that shape human capital capabilities, in particular the role of the institution of marriage, family and kinship, and community entitlements. Approaching human capital from a basic needs perspective this research explores the gender literature around nutrition, education, health and social well-being including the psychological impacts of gender-based violence. The theoretical approach examines both the environmental and socio-cultural practices underpinning vulnerability to poverty. This thesis extends the work of both Chant and Moser from an urban to a rural context, offering a new and hitherto unexamined perspective to the feminisation poverty, namely the social processes that engender the vulnerability of women in ecologically fragile rural communities.

8.3 Methodology

To address the aim and objectives, Ethiopia was selected as the country of study, focusing on Koraro, a small rural village, located in the northern province of Tigray. I believe this is the first feminist study carried out in Koraro village, which examines the feminisation of poverty from a rural context. Koraro is an ecologically fragile village because it is at risk to environmental hazards (droughts, flooding and famine). The methodological approach used in this research is ethnographic, involving multiple methods of gathering data (interviews, observation, photography). The choice of location for this research, its planning, and subsequent execution, took several months, as it involved securing Ethiopian government permission, support from the University of Addis Ababa, and the preparation of local logistical arrangements. The in-country data was gathered over two field-trips, separated by several months. This separation of field work allowed for a period of critical reflection on

both the theoretical framework and the collected data. During the time of reflection some conceptual weaknesses were identified and addressed. During both expeditions, in-depth semi-structured and unstructured interviews were carried out, observational data was collected, and photographs taken (with permission) of daily household activities. The data collected focused on agricultural and non-agricultural work; rural and urban market trading; community ceremonies and celebrations; and religious rituals and festivals. This observational data was collected inside and outside of Koraro spanning four adjacent regions; Tigray, Afar, Amhara and Oromia. Lastly, in order to gain a measure of the validity and reliability of findings, this research triangulated the in-country findings with an in-depth documentary analysis of: academic studies, regional and local government reports, and research reports from various international developmental agencies.

8.4 Synthesis and contribution to existing frameworks

What constitutes wealth or poverty embodies a shared belief that is reproduced in socio-cultural norms. In Koraro to be poor is to be without health, because health represents the capabilities to work. If a person is able to work, they can support their household's livelihood, therefore, that person is not perceived to be poor. The participants explained that health includes emotional and psychological well-being; the health of the body is connected to the health of the mind. Some of the participants recognise poverty as being due to the environment, women experience the fragility of the landscape differently to men because their relationship with the natural environment is different. This research adds to the work of Fukuda-Parr (1999) she found poverty to be more or less analogous with being a woman, because of its association with social identity. Women are identified by the community as poor because of their lower social status, agency and autonomy and vice versa (101).

The analysis revealed that the conditions that shape poverty are dynamic, and the capabilities of women to sustain the livelihoods of their households are continuously shaped through the course of their lives, not only by the unpredictability of their natural environment, but also by the cultural allocation of social and economic rights. This was communicated by the participants, as they reflected on their lived experiences in different stages of their life. The perspectives of women to their vulnerability to poverty slightly changed with their age, socio-economic status, marital status, and motherhood status. Although, their differing perspectives provide for a rich account of the lives of women living

in ecologically fragile communities, the core ideas of what shapes the vulnerability of women were shared: underage marriage; poor education; responsibilities of child rearing; threats to personal security; restricted economic participation; limited access to land, housing and financial resources; and, gender inequality. These intersected with wider structural factors: food insecurity; external environmental and economic shocks; poorly developed infrastructure and utilities; nepotism in local government; and, poor economy. The participants elucidated that the social well-being of women and girls is entwined with the physical, economic, environmental, political and social development of the village. The capabilities of women to sustain their livelihoods is shaped by their ascribed entitlements and obligations. Therefore, the idea of poverty is not only self-defined (for example being well-enough to work) but also socially defined through ascribed entitlements and obligations. However, the scales of social justice are weighted so that a woman seems to carry a disproportionately heavier burden of obligations and fewer entitlements relative to men. The result is that being a woman is more or less synonymous with being poor.

8.4.1 Gendered entitlements and obligations, and socio-cultural practices

The gender division of labour informs the ascription of entitlements and obligations creating binary gender identities of the feminine and masculine which become culturally shared beliefs. In Koraro the gender division of labour is responsible for informing the wider social structure of the community, creating clearly defined gender roles and relations. This division applies to entitlements and can be seen in the use of space. The conceptualisation of gendered spaces provides for deeper insights of the social nuances that shape the relations between women and men. In Koraro household reproductive work with all its connotations are the preserve of women, while productive work with all its connotations belong to men.

This research adds to the work of Day (2001) that female identities are formed through the negotiation with, and polarisation of male gender identities (109-101). The analysis found that the construction of female gender identities includes the social process of separation; this is the creation of cultural taboos that restrict and prohibit women from participating in cultural practices that inform the male identity, authority and power. The participants are prohibited from engaging in essential farming activities like; ploughing the fields and sowing the seeds. For women to engage in such activities is a social taboo and safeguards these productive practices to be masculine. Farming is associated with physical strength and is a

masculine attribute. In contrast domestic work is perceived to be less strenuous and therefore appropriate as this is in keeping with feminine attributes. Further, men are emasculated by the community if they undertake domestic labour. The process of separation is a feature of women's transient rights, women's involvement in agriculture is to temporally aid men with specific agricultural tasks during the changing agricultural seasons. This is contrasted with the share-cropping schemes female headed households hold with local male farmers. Women are entitled to hold land titles but their rights to how the land is utilised is subject to the share-cropping schemes with farmers. Further, the injunction of women being farmers extends to accessing essential farming inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and their exclusion with the wider agricultural market – domestic and international export markets.

8.4.2 The ascription of entitlements/rights and obligations/responsibilities

This research agrees with the work of Kabeer (1994) women's experience of poverty from the position of their asymmetrical relationship to household-entitlements, many women receive their entitlements through marriage and kinship, limiting their control over what they produce [their labour] or what they can own. The analysis revealed the evolving tensions between entitlements and obligations shaping women's agency through the various stages of the life cycle in rural communities. This is entwined with their evolving gender status with respect to marriage, family and kinship and the community. In Ethiopia marriage informs the specific traditional and legal rights of girls and women: marriageability; property rights; bodily and labour rights; social rights; motherhood; and, the rights of women on the dissolution of the marriage contract. The social transition of girls to adulthood is achieved by the institution of marriage then motherhood, linking women's social status to family and kinship, shaping the social identity of the feminine. In the process of transforming from girl to women, she also acquires new rights of independence, albeit it still constrained and transient. The construction of female rights is contentious particularly around the customary norms of the marriageability of girls. The customary laws embedded in the institution of marriage are supportive of the rights of men. The marriageability of girls depends on a selection of culturally specific attributes, in rural Ethiopia: age; virginity; submission; obedience; reproductive capabilities; labour and behavioural attributes. The entitlements of girls change when they approach a marriageable age particularly in rural communities where underage marriage is widely practiced. It is a paradoxical moment in the life cycle of a girl

where she exchanges one set of transient rights for another set of transient rights through patrilocal customs.

This research agrees with Radcliffe-Brown (1955) and Moore (1988) that marriage and property embody two paradigms for women: 'women as a type of property'; and, 'women as access to property' in Moore (1988:64). Underage marriage has a detrimental effect on the well-being and the future capabilities of girls contributing greatly to their vulnerability to poverty. The socialisation and rituals that are undertaken to ensure marriageability involves different members of the household and kin-group, which at times includes various forms of gender based-violence: physical abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM/C). Other types of behaviour include socialising girls to be self-sacrificing and altruistic during times of food insecurity. This research goes further and found that these harmful customs are also practiced on girls from female headed households, especially during the hungry season girls are at risk to nutrition and health deprivation.

The central tensions that emerge around all rights of women is between customary and state law. The embeddedness of customary laws and the geographic remoteness of a community from state institutions are mutually reinforcing. Where the administrative reach of state apparatus is weak, and/or community leaders and elders hold to traditional views or are apprehensive about implementing state laws that change the status quo, then the rights of women languish. The reformations of the family code 2000 and Land Act which better improve the rights of girls and women with respect to marriage and inheritance are important legislation reforms in Ethiopia. However, women are still marginalised in both marriage and divorce, and inheritance. The capabilities of women to contest unfair treatment is dependent on their educational attainment, which is eroded through underage marriage. The practice of patrilocal and patrilineal customs shapes the rights and responsibilities of women, and their accumulation of essential resources. Women intergenerationally inherit portable household assets to aid them with their reproductive labour and can have access to the conjugal agricultural land. It is through the institution of marriage that couples will gain access to essential assets. In Tigray this is a contributing factor to the rapid emergence of nuclear agricultural households. On the dissolution of the marriage contract the transient rights of women shift again. The rights they acquired while married are replaced with another set of rights depending on the outcome of the divorce settlement: re-marriage; their return to natal village; or establish their own household. This study found that, the remarriage rates in Ethiopia of men is significantly higher than among

women, raising the question of why women are choosing not to remarry. Many women choose not to remarry because they did not want to lose their independent rights. The cycle of marrying and divorcing and but not re-marrying sheds light on the rural-to-rural migration patterns of women. Many women will be ostracised from their natal village on divorce, customary they may no longer continue to reside in their spouse's village. Women who are unable to migrate home will migrate to another rural village. This was the migratory pattern in Koraro, some of the divorced women who were ostracised from their natal villages for being a bad-wife, migrated to Koraro because they had an established social network with a resident of the village. The migration pattern; natal household – patrilocal household – natal household – Koraro.

In contrast, patrilocal customs contribute to affixing the rights of men spatially and temporally to one community. The entitlements of men means they have rights to land in the community in which they live. They may also inherit their social networks and social capital through their father's social status. The interconnected social structure of rural communities makes the accumulation of social capital an essential resource that individuals start accumulating from a young age. Girls learn to establish relationships with other girls while carrying out their household tasks: collecting firewood and water and washing the clothes in the stream. The migration patterns of women through patrilocal customs can either inhibit or promote the well-being of women. Re-accumulating eroded social capital through migration can marginalise women in new villages especially young girls. However, that women appear to migrate rather than remarry is an indication of them seeing the challenges of migration as being less than the potential cost of remarriage (loss of independence, and the loss of assets to the new husband). In Koraro it takes around five years to be fully-socialised into the community. On the other hand, over time women accumulate vast social networks that stretch across village boundaries reaching into urban centres that become an essential resource to access urban market spaces. The livelihoods strategies of women are changeable, diverging from those of men as they get older. The study reveals the accumulation of women's agency is an incremental social process, growing and becoming stronger as they mature into old age.

This research diverges from the work of Chant (2007) feminisation of responsibility and Brydon (2010) feminisation of family responsibility. Chant found that women of all ages are increasing their paid productive work outside the household while still being primarily responsible for most of the unpaid reproductive familial work. Brydon supports Chant's

findings with her work, women and men are not renegotiating traditional obligations, women are assuming the responsibilities of men such as, paying for education and purchasing clothes while still being responsible for domestic work. Chant further said although this shift in behaviour was occurring it did not correspond to an increase in women's intra-household bargaining power or agency. She concluded that women's overall burdens were increasing both inside and outside the household and they are not matched to increasing their personal benefits, such as, 'personal time, freedom, or becoming more individualistic and autonomous' (334).

The divergence from the above authors is grounded in the approach to the feminisation of (family) responsibility from the perspective of rural female headed households and the wider-community of women. The analysis revealed the transient livelihood strategies may liberate women from the customary subordination to husbands. However, these strategies at the same time work to perpetuate an inequality as their children are socialised so, as to maintain traditional gender rights and obligations. The vulnerability of female headed households increases as women assume the traditional obligations of men who abscond their responsibilities to support the financial and educational needs of their children. The financial burdens of children exponentially increase as they approach secondary school because of Koraro's poor education infrastructure, they are sent to live in small towns to continue with their education forcing women to support two households. This increases the overall burdens of women inside and outside the household as they also lose household labour contributions and increases their vulnerability to external shocks. This shapes the livelihood options available to female headed households, as boys are privileged over girls to attend secondary school because of limited financial resources, so that mothers are more dependent on the reproductive labour of girls. The educational needs of young girls are disenfranchised as part of a household livelihood strategy. This, therefore, impacts the overall social well-being of girls and contributes to the reproduction of the feminisation of vulnerability. Men do not lose their social privileges when they abandon their obligations to their children, yet women lose their social status when they head their own household and assume these obligations of men. Further, the rights of men to their children are not compromised by their absconding behaviour. With respect to the negotiations of the marriage contract, absent (absconding) fathers have the right to negotiate the terms of their children's marriage contract without consulting the mother. The participants said they feel unable to challenge this custom. There is a transfer of resources (including previous investments) the mother is/was responsible for caring for the child(ren) and has over the

years invested in the overall well-being of the child(ren), at times at the expense of own well-being. Contrasted with the absent father who did not contribute anything towards his child(ren) over the years. The marriage contract is a negotiation of resources between two households, and women are not permitted to take part. This represents a transfer of wealth and investment from female headed households to male headed households. The (absconding) men are the recipients of the financial and social exchange in the contract. The women who have assumed the financial responsibilities, including the investment of their reproductive work are not 'compensated' for their loss of household labour.

This research agrees with the work of Moyneux (2002) women in low-income groups foster the strongest bonds by establishing vast social networks and engaging in reciprocal relations. The analysis revealed as a coping strategy to the above custom, women draw on their social capital in the form of social ties with other female headed households to recover from the labour shock in exchange for other household resources. The absent support from fathers or kin serves to strengthen the social bonds between the women of the community. These abandoned responsibilities of men become absorbed among female headed households, as women provide each other with financial, food, household labour and child care support. Therefore, the well-being of Koraro disproportionately falls to the women of the community.

8.4.3 Rural female-headed households

This research agrees with the work of Chant (2016) and Elson . Chant found that female headed households may be stigmatised as 'unfortunate' or even 'deviant'. The stigmatisation may extend to the children in the household, particularly to the boys, who are perceived to be 'deprived' of a 'male role model' (30). In the work of Elson, she found that in patriarchal societies female headed households are not emancipated from male power despite their improved intra-household agency. The analysis revealed in Koraro female headed households are assumed to be deviant spaces regardless of their pathways to formation: widowhood; divorce; or never married. These are social spaces within the community that symbolically challenge Koraro's hegemonic social structure. It is believed that women are incapable of socialising children, especially boys in the correct social customs and gender roles without a co-resident male, the children are thought to be deviant. Children from female headed households are stigmatised as being a son of a women, not a son of a man. They also inherit a poor reputation effecting their future social

standing within the community. Female headed households represent the capabilities of women to sustain a household without a co-resident male partner, juxtaposed with the dependency of men on the reproductive labour of women to sustain their households.

They have lower social status and less intra-community agency; although, widows are held in higher esteem than divorced women, single women are held with lowest regard. Their community status influences the relationships they have with the local government; building social relations are essential for securing basic needs. The entitlements of female headed households are negotiated with the men of the community; the local government and village elders.

The participant's access to land for housing and agricultural, to food aid and the productive safety net program is facilitated through support from the Kebele (local government). The separation between the state and traditional bodies of authority in Koraro is not so distinct, as they involve overlapping bodies. Maintaining traditional customs serves their interests and the interests of their households and kin. For example, nepotism is widely practiced in Koraro, yet it does not form good formal administrative practice in any modern model of governance. The constant tensions between women's legal rights and customary rights is reproduced in all of women's engagement with men of the wider-community, for example: attending community meetings; the utilisation of their agricultural holdings; access to food aid; and, their economic engagement in market spaces. As a livelihood's strategy, where possible, the participants will enlist the help of a male relative to engage with other traditional masculine social institutions on their behalf; like, buying and selling of cattle in the livestock market. This behaviour contributes to the feminisation of vulnerability because women's access to essential assets are embedded in complex gendered social relationships with male authority. This reveals the permeability and negotiability of the male/female entitlements/obligations boundaries. It is another facet of the transience of women's entitlements and obligations. Their livelihood strategies here describe an economic transaction space that is negotiated with men, albeit that the latter tend to gain proportionately more from such transaction.

8.4.4 Food insecurity and coping strategies

As Kabeer (1994) notes, vulnerable households manage their assets from an insecure position which requires foresight and planning, especially with regards to food security. Moreover, consistent with Kabeer's argument, this study shows environmental shocks hinder the capabilities of women to appropriately manage their household grain stock. In Koraro extensive periods of food shortage has become so taken-for-granted that it is acknowledged as 'the hungry season'. This additional season shifts those vulnerable female headed households that experience occasional nutrition deprivation into a state of chronic nutrition deprivation. This is a clear example of Moser and Satterthwaite's (2008) observation that the fragility of assets to climate-related disasters exposes the vulnerability of the most affected peoples. In Koraro female headed households have less available resources which increases their vulnerability during times of extreme weather conditions.

The analysis found coping mechanisms to be a feature of the transient nature of women's livelihood strategies. Individual household members experience the stress of food insecurity differently, patterns of intra-household food distribution are relative to individual consumption needs; age and gender. The type of coping strategies used by the women mirrors the severity of the shock and the available resources of the household. An essential livelihood resource are women's social networks and the ability to exploit those relationships in a time of need. Inter-household obligations – community interdependency – may reduce individual household autonomy over food stock and other household assets. The close-knit bond between female headed households in Koraro is evident in the findings where women feel responsible for the well-being of each other's households. This shapes how individual households manage their essential resources, women are always considering the needs of their friends, family and neighbours alongside their own. Some of the participants said if her neighbour was in poverty then she is in poverty, the well-being of the individual household is linked to the well-being of multiple households because of their interhousehold dependency in Koraro's fragile landscape.

This research disagrees with Buvinić and Gupta (1997), Chant and Craske (2003) and Chant (2007) that in female headed households' resources are allocated more equitable and that children particularly girls fare better than in male headed households. The analysis found evidence for gendered patterns of food allocation during times of food insecurity. Female headed households reproduce the same gendered norms that disenfranchise the rights of female household members in male households. Nutrition substitution is a coping

mechanism which substitutes hunger for malnourishment and enables households to carry out their duties without feeling hunger. However, this increases the likelihood of failing health. The participants feed their households food-water, a method of adding excess water to the meal while it is cooking to increase overall food quantity at the cost of nutritional quality. The servings of women and young girls are considerably smaller than male household members. The analysis found that female household members are at greater risk to nutrition deprivation than male household members.

8.4.5 Economic entitlements

The economic participation of women in the economy is well researched within the literature and by development organisations. Much of the discourse centres around the constraints of women's familial obligations that restrict their access into paid work and how governments do not account for the unpaid labour contribution of women's reproductive work (Kabeer, 1994;2003). Kabeer's insightful view of the economy as an interconnecting tier of multiple economies offers an alternative approach to understanding the various levels of the economic participation of men and women in the: formal; informal; subsistence; unpaid; and, reproductive and care economy. This study went further and found evidence of three interconnected economic trading spaces that structure the rural economy, and explored the participation of women in these macro, meso and micro trading spaces. Macro-markets are characterised by both formal and informal trade and productive work between rural and small urban centres like Hawzen and Senkata market, and cities like Mekele and Addis Ababa. These markets spaces bridge subsistence agriculture producers with Ethiopia's formal economy for domestic distribution and international export. The meso-market is characterised by trading between villages on individual market days, agricultural producers, wholesale resellers, and day traders from around the region sell their goods on various market days in different neighbouring villages. Sharing similarities with day-markets in small urban centres, these markets are characterised as inter-community trading, this includes Koraro's nominated market-day. Micro-markets are characterised by productive and non-remunerated work that supports the local subsistence and informal sector through farm and nonfarm enterprises, this includes work provided through the Productive Safety Net Programme. Koraro's micro-market trading focuses on daily intra-community trading in small establishments and various home-based enterprises. Koraro's small non-remunerated work

sector comprises of the volunteer economy: health-extension workers; agricultural-extension workers; and community extension workers.

The economic participation of women in these markets is shaped by the gender division of trade separating trading into feminine and masculine economic spaces. Traditional economic markets are masculine spaces while the participation of women is restricted to informal and subsistence trading. The reproductive and parenting obligations of women limit their economic participation in macro-economic activity to transient areas, such as petty trading on the side of the road. Markets places are also social spaces where women and men can strengthen their social capital locally and in the surrounding areas. The masculine-feminine space dichotomy is visible in other social places. Instead of socialising with one another in private homes, there are designated *women only public coffee-houses* located in various side alleys in the market. These spaces are blacked-out structures concealed from public view for women to utilise, while men may openly frequent the open street facing public bars.

The participants' main economic engagement is in Koraro's micro-market. This research confirms with the work of Moser (2007;2009) that a livelihood strategy of the poor is to convert their home into a place of work. The analysis revealed that many women adapt their homes as economic spaces, which is a phenomenon shared by the poor in both urban and rural areas. This dual use of houses enables their utility for primary and secondary functions, making them an essential asset. This is a fundamental livelihood strategy of women, allowing them to participate economically in market spaces without unsettling gender norms. This research separates home enterprises into two categories; private and public. Private enterprises are economic spaces that manufacture goods and services at are sold outside of the household. Public enterprises are economic spaces that manufacture goods and services at are sold inside the household. Closely associated with home enterprises are nonfarm enterprises, not all nonfarm enterprises are home enterprises, however, all home enterprises are categorised as nonfarm enterprises. The type of participation is relative to the economic endowments of the household; physical and productive assets, household labour, education attainment and social networks. The women who make artisan crafts to be sold in Mekele rely on their social networks with other women to get their products to the market further, they need the natural resources (grass) and the labour to make the artisan crafts. Women who sell tela are reliant on the available natural resources (water, fuel-wood, seeds, grain), kitchen appliances such as a stove to bake the tela mix, other small house durables (canisters, cups, bowls) used in the production process, and tela is labour intensive

for producing and selling. Different home enterprises will have a selection of different economic baskets to manufacture their products and services.

Home enterprises are an economic adaption of various *first-generation* capital assets into another fundamental *first-generation* capital asset – income. The manufacturing capabilities of these home enterprises are shaped by Koraro’s ecology, high dependency on available natural resources and household labour which links the economic vulnerability with the external environment. The most common home enterprise for female headed households is the adaption of their homes into local bars selling traditional alcohol. This reintroduces the public-private space dichotomy reorienting a feminine space into a masculine space. These become high risk spaces that expose women to violence from their (male) customers. The duality of these female headed households is paradoxical: in its primary function, these feminine spaces have intra-household agency, income entitlements and freedoms from intimate partner violence; in its secondary function, these becomes masculine spaces and the rights of women are ambiguous, their income is dependent on the male patron, and they are at risk to verbal, physical and sexual violence. The growth of tela houses in small rural communities like Koraro is linked to the areas poorly development economic infrastructure.

8.5 Further research

It is, important to acknowledge that at the time of this study Ethiopia was experiencing a severe drought, and that probably had an impact on the perspectives of the participants and consequently on the research findings. There is scope for further research to be done in rural Ethiopian villages to deepen our understanding of the feminisation of vulnerability to poverty. Although, this research was not a comparative study, there is a community in the Amhara region of Ethiopia who would make for a good case study. They have collectively decided to remove traditional ascribed gender roles and relations in the household and community to pursue an egalitarian approach to their livelihoods, it is a small community about the size of Koraro. This would be a good community to further explore the ascription of the rights and responsibilities of women and men and compare the findings with the findings in Koraro.

EPILOGUE

This epilogue should be read in conjunction with chapter four. The aim of this reflective piece of writing is to provide some deeper researcher insights and to highlight the complexities of carrying-out research like this as a guide for others who may endeavour to undertake a similar research project in the future. In chapter four I disclosed some of the hostilities I encountered, this is not to suggest that I was in danger while in Ethiopia. My overall experience in Ethiopia was positive and I was welcomed by most people with whom I interacted, both women and men, young and old. People were very kind, gentle and expressed genuine care for my personal well-being, people felt a sense of personal responsibility towards me as a guest in their country – this behaviour is an overall reflection of Ethiopian culture. This epilogue is divided into two parts; it begins with a reflection on the interviews and relationships with the participants; the second part will address the relationships with the wider community and facilitating institutions.

In the context of this research deciding where to go and who to study was a decision that required careful consideration. As a researcher, I was conscious of my impact on the communities I would be studying and on those who would assist me in executing the study i.e. the research assistants. The study reflects my perspectives as the researcher, which has been shaped by my personal history and experiences, and I was aware that my perspectives would be different from the standpoints of the participants. My experiences with the women in Liberia and researching remote communities shaped my perceptions of women living in ecologically fragile communities. Further, my cultural-bias informed my perspectives for example, my opinions about domestic-violence and gender equality were different from some of the participants. However, I did not allow for my cultural-bias to shape those conversations about domestic-violence and gender equality, these conversations were lead by the participants. I was aware that as a critical researcher I took my perspectives with me into the field, and as a consequence of the research process I would have left aspects of my viewpoints behind when I exited the field. This happens naturally through building relationships with the participants. At the end of each interview I answered personal questions the participants asked me, and I shared my personal motivation why I was carrying out the research. I connected aspects of the participants stories with stories of other women including mine, the women in my life and the women in Liberia. I shared my personal motivation to advocate to the wider research community the well-being of women living in ecologically fragile communities with the overall aim to influence future development policy.

The aim to be transformative by influencing development policy to advance social justice causes is an aspect of research-reciprocity in the research process. Being an outsider from the community provided me with a degree of distance from the lives of the participants which created a space they were comfortable with. I guaranteed to the participants that neither I nor my research assistant would discuss what they said to me with the other participants. Further, the interviews allowed the participants a brief moment to reflect on their experiences in relation to the interview questions. By the second day of interviewing, most women had heard through the grapevine about the study, were familiar with what was being discussed in the interviews, and several approached us to ask if we would interview them. However, as an outsider I will not be able to fully comprehend the experiences of the women in the community and the insights gathered from this study are only a glimpse into the lives of the participants reflecting a moment in time. As a researcher you need to be aware that you may hear stories that are very upsetting. However, the role of the researcher is to respectfully listen to the women who are willing to share their stories, and also acknowledge that these are stories they want to tell. It is the responsibility of the researcher to truthfully represent what they find in the field. Interviewing participants who are illiterate introduces another power-dynamic into the research process. To address this power-dynamic we read and (re)-read the participants answers back to them to clarify that is what they were saying. During some of the transcript read backs, a few of the participants would elaborate more on a topic by telling a story which I included in their transcript. Equally, if during the read back the participant was not comfortable with what I had written down or decided they no longer wanted parts of their story to be included in the study, I removed it. In effect I became the custodian of the participants stories. However, I was always questioning how I was perceiving their stories, how would I interpret and present their stories within a wider body of literature to an audience they were not aware of, and how that foreign audience might understand these accounts. My intension was not to alter the perspectives of those who participated in the study nor to disrupt their lives. The research process is an intrusive process and is relative to the amount of time spent in the field. This is why it is essential to incorporate reflexive principles into every stage of the research process. To continuously question: how are the participants engaging with the research process? How is my presence being perceived by those in the community not actively participating in the research? However, the participants are resilient agents, they are the ones who permit me the researcher access to their stories, they control the narrative during the interviews i.e. what they want to share. If they do not want to continue with the interview, they will stop it, and if a few the participants do that, there is a risk that all of the participants will become

disinterested. There is a constant tension between participants agreeing to grant me access in principle and maintaining that access as participants become either interested or disinterested in contributing to the study. Only one participant terminated the interview early, she became disinterested in the conversation, she told us she no longer wanted to continue with the interview. To which we thanked her for her time and left her house and I did not include her interview data in the study, however this early termination did not dissuade others from taking part in the study. At the end of each day, my research assistants and I would reflect on the interview process, we would share our thoughts about the day. I would question them about my interaction with the participants and we would discuss key points raised by the participants. My research assistants were experienced researchers who have been previously employed by other international research institutions i.e. universities, think-tanks, and development institutions. Chapter four mentions a personal upset one of my research assistants experienced. Through the daily practice of reflection, my research assistant became self-aware, he realised that he was not aware of the hardships of his fellow country-women and of his privileged social position being a man. This moment of realisation occurred after a day of hearing sensitive stories from some of the participants. As part of my responsibility towards my research assistant I asked him if he wanted to terminate his employment with me, to which he did not. We agreed to change the research strategy over the next few days, and we discussed how the experience was affecting him. He communicated to me at the end of the study the intrinsic benefits from his involvement in the study and asked if he could be involved in any future research projects.

The research process also altered my perspective as a researcher through the relationships I developed with the participants, research assistants and the other facilitating institutions. This was underpinned by my developing experience of the participants' environment, and reflexively engaging with the research process as I built different types of relationships with different actors in the study. To be aware of the interests of others that go beyond the participants is one of the biggest challenges to carrying out this type of research, and it is an important ethical consideration of do no harm. From my previous research experience in Liberia I was aware that researching special interest groups involves including other members of the community into the research project, and to nurture a relationship with them. The members of the wider community prodigiously the men can act as gatekeepers to the women who volunteer to take part in the study, including women they do not know. If the men want to obstruct the research process they can. To manage the men of the wider community requires political skill to secure their consent, however, their consent needs to

be (re)acquired every day. This does not mean that you need to go up to the men and ask for their explicit permission to carry-out the study every day. What I mean is they must feel that they are also a part of the research. Firstly, while carrying out the study we spoke at length with the appropriate authorities of the village. They said they will tell the members of the community about the research we would be carrying out in the village including for how long we would be there. Secondly, we made time to speak with some of the men in the village who did not participate in the study, but who had particular questions about the research and about me. It was important to develop relationships with these men. Their questions were answered diplomatically, and we refrained from disclosing the questions that were gender-sensitive for example gender-based violence questions. As a research team, we adopted a strategy as to how we would answer questions from the men and re-focus the conversation by asking them general questions about agricultural production, environmental shocks and market trading. To strengthen these relationships, we accepted invitations to visit their farms and their homes for coffee. It was important to continuously reassure the men that we did not come to the village to disrupt the status quo. I wanted to minimise any suspicions they may have had about us, thus safeguarding the participants engaging with the study. It was an important aspect of my duty of care towards the participants. Chapter four points out the strategy we used when men would walk into the houses of the women we were interviewing. We explained to them that we wanted to discuss issues relating to women's health and these men would respectfully leave the house. Deployment of such strategies as part of the research process is an aspect that separates this type for research from home-country research. As a researcher you are temporarily embedded not just within the close-knit communities you are researching but also embedded more widely within that country's institutional hierarchy of authority. You are continuously observing your surroundings and making daily assessments of your experiences in the field, which you draw on as you contemplate how you are going to proceed with the study. Moreover, you are constantly navigating tensions and personal frustrations that things are not always going to go as planned, and this requires flexibility and patience. Further, as part of building community reciprocity at the end of every day different members of the community would travel with us back to Hawzen. The public transportation between the village and Hawzen is limited and expensive. Before entering the country, it was necessary to secure access to participants by gaining government consent to carry-out in-country research, and to establish a formal relationship with an official who could provide some level of support for personal security. Safety is paramount for all involved in the study. It is also important to be aware that some gatekeepers may try to extort a financial benefit from the research by

obstructing the research and this should be reported to government officials. Chapter four mentions one of the encounters that threatened the safety of the research team.

This epilogue provided some deeper reflection on the interview process and the relationships that were developed with the participants. It highlighted how my life experiences shaped my perspectives and approach to the women who participated in this study. Further, it touched on aspects of research-reciprocity, duty of care towards the participants and research assistants, and being an outsider-researcher. The epilogue addressed the importance of managing relationships with the wider community and institutional actors to safeguard the women who participated in this study. Finally, it highlighted the need to develop community-reciprocity and secure consent from the appropriate officials to safeguard all involved in the study i.e. the researcher, the research-assistants, and the participants.

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